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FROM

Misses Emma & Elizabeth Harris

THE

WIDE, WIDE WORLD.

BY

ELIZABETH WETHERELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Here at the portal thou dost stand,
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate,
Into the future's undiscovered land.
I see its valves expand,
As at the touch of FATE!
Into those realms of Love and Hate.

LONGFELLOW

VOLUME II.

NEW-YORK:
GEORGE P. PUTNAM, 155 BROADWAY.

1851.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure.
Kings may be blest, but *they* were glorious,
O'er all the ills o' life victorious.

BURNS.

CHRISTMAS morning was dawning gray, but it was still far from broad daylight, when Ellen was awakened. She found little Ellen Chauncey pulling and pushing at her shoulders, and whispering "Ellen! Ellen!"—in a tone that showed a great fear of waking somebody up. There she was, in night-gown and nightcap, and barefooted too, with a face brim-full of excitement and as wide awake as possible. Ellen roused herself in no little surprise and asked what the matter was.

"I am going to look at my stocking," whispered her visiter,—"don't you want to get up and come with me? it's just here in the other room,—come!—don't make any noise."

"But what if you should find nothing in it?" said Ellen laughingly, as she bounded out of bed.

"Ah but I shall, I know;—I always do;—never fear. Hush! step ever so softly—I don't want to wake anybody."

"It's hardly light enough for you to see," whispered Ellen, as the two little barefooted white figures glided out of the room.

"O yes it is—that's all the fun. Hush!—don't make a bit of noise—I know where it hangs—mamma always puts it at the back of her big easy chair—come this way—here it is! O Ellen! there's two of 'em! There's one for you! there's one for you!"

In a tumult of delight one Ellen capered about the floor on the tips of her little bare toes, while the other, not less happy, stood still for pleasure. The dancer finished by hugging and kissing her with all her heart, declaring she was so glad she didn't know what to do.

"But how shall we know which is which?"

"Perhaps they are both alike," said Ellen.

"No—at any rate one's for me, and t'other's for you. Stop! here are pieces of paper, with our names on I guess—let's turn the chair a little bit to the light—there—yes!—Ellen—M-o-n,—there, that's yours; my name doesn't begin with an M; and this is mine!"

Another caper round the room, and then she brought up in front of the chair where Ellen was still standing.

"I wonder what's in 'em," she said; "I want to look, and I *don't* want to. Come, you begin."

"But that's no stocking of mine," said Ellen, a smile gradually breaking upon her sober little face; "my leg never was as big as that."

"Stuffed, isn't it?" said Ellen Chauncey. "O do make haste, and see what is in yours. I want to know so I don't know what to do."

"Well, will you take out of yours as fast as I take out of mine?"

"Well!"——

O mysterious delight, and delightful mystery, of the stuffed stocking! Ellen's trembling fingers sought the top, and then very suddenly left it.

"I can't think what it is," said she laughing,—"it feels so funny."

"O never mind! make haste," said Ellen Chauncey; "it won't hurt you, I guess."

"No, it won't hurt me," said Ellen,—"but"—

She drew forth a great bunch of white grapes.

"Splendid! isn't it?" said Ellen Chauncey. "Now for mine."

It was the counterpart of Ellen's bunch.

"So far, so good," said she. "Now for the next."

The next thing in each stocking was a large horn of sugar-plums.

"Well that's fine, isn't it?" said Ellen Chauncey;—"your's is tied with white ribbon and mine with blue; that's all the difference. O, and your paper's red and mine is purple."

"Yes, and the pictures are different," said Ellen.

"Well, I had rather they would be different, wouldn't

you? I think it's just as pleasant. One's as big as the other, at any rate. Come—what's next?"

Ellen drew out a little bundle, which being opened proved to be a nice little pair of dark kid gloves.

"O I wonder who gave me this!" she said,—"it's just what I wanted. How pretty! O I'm so glad. I guess who it was,"

"O look here," said the other Ellen, who had been diving into *her* stocking,—"I've got a ball—this is just what I wanted too; George told me if I'd get one he'd show me how to play. Isn't it pretty? Isn't it funny we should each get just what we wanted? O this is a very nice ball. I'm glad I've got it. Why here is another great round thing in my stocking!—what can it be? they wouldn't give me *two* balls," said she, chuckling.

"So there is in mine!" said Ellen. "Maybe they're apples?"

"They aren't! they wouldn't give us apples; besides, it is soft. Pull it out and see."

"Then they are oranges," said Ellen laughing.

"*I* never felt such a soft orange," said little Ellen Chauncey. "Come Ellen! stop laughing, and let's see."

They were two great scarlet satin pincushions, with E. C. and E. M. very neatly stuck in pins.

"Well, we sha'n't want pins for a good while, shall we?" said Ellen. "Who gave us these?"

"I know," said little Ellen Chauncey,—"Mrs. Bland."

"She was very kind to make one for me," said Ellen. "Now for the next!"

Her next thing was a little bottle of Cologne water.

"I can tell who put that in," said her friend,—"aunt Sophia. I know her little bottles of Cologne water. Do you love Cologne water? Aunt Sophia's is delicious."

Ellen did like it very much, and was extremely pleased. Ellen Chauncey had also a new pair of scissors which gave entire satisfaction.

"Now I wonder what all this toe is stuffed with," said she,—"raisins and almonds, I declare! and yours the same, isn't it? Well, don't you think we have got enough sweet things? Isn't this a pretty good Christmas?"

"What are you about, you monkeys?" cried the voice of

aunt Sophia from the dressing-room door. "Alice, Alice! do look at them. Come, right back to bed both of you. Crazy pates! It is lucky it is Christmas day—if it was any other in the year we should have you both sick in bed; as it is I suppose you will go scot free."

Laughing, and rosy with pleasure, they came back and got into bed together; and for an hour afterwards the two kept up a most animated conversation, intermixed with long chuckles and bursts of merriment, and whispered communications of immense importance. The arrangement of the painted needlebook was entirely decided upon in this consultation; also two or three other matters; and the two children seemed to have already lived a day since daybreak by the time they came down to breakfast.

After breakfast Ellen applied secretly to Alice to know if she could write *very* beautifully; she exceedingly wanted something done.

"I should not like to venture, Ellie, if it must be so superfine; but John can do it for you."

"Can he? Do you think he would?"

"I am sure he will if you ask him."

"But I don't like to ask him," said Ellen, casting a doubtful glance at the window.

"Nonsense! he's only reading the newspaper. You won't disturb him."

"Well you won't say anything about it?"

"Certainly not."

Ellen accordingly went near and said gently, "Mr. Humphreys,"—but he did not seem to hear her. "Mr. Humphreys!"—a little louder.

"He has not arrived yet," said John, looking round gravely.

He spoke so gravely that Ellen could not tell whether he were joking or serious. Her face of extreme perplexity was too much for his command of countenance. "Whom do you want to speak to?" said he, smiling.

"I wanted to speak to you, sir," said Ellen, "if you are not too busy."

"*Mr. Humphreys* is always busy," said he, shaking his head; "but *Mr. John* can attend to you at any time, and *John* will do for you whatever you please to ask him."

"Then, Mr. John," said Ellen laughing, "if you please I

wanted to ask you to do something for me very much indeed, if you are not too busy; Alice said I shouldn't disturb you."

"Not at all; I've been long enough over this stupid newspaper. What is it?"

"I want you, if you will be so good," said Ellen, "to write a little bit for me on something, very beautifully."

"'Very beautifully!' Well—come to the library; we will see."

"But it is a great secret," said Ellen; "you won't tell anybody?"

"Tortures sha'n't draw it from me—when I know what it is," said he, with one of his comical looks.

In high glee Ellen ran for the pieces of Bristol board which were to form the backs of the needlebook, and brought them to the library; and explained how room was to be left in the middle of each for a painting, a rose on one, a butterfly on the other; the writing to be as elegant as possible, above, beneath, and roundabout, as the fancy of the writer should choose.

"Well, what is to be inscribed on this most original of needlebooks?" said John, as he carefully mended his pen.

"Stop!"—said Ellen,—"I'll tell you in a minute—on this one, the front you know, is to go, 'To my dear mother, many happy New Years;'—and on this side, 'From her dear little daughter, Ellen Chauncey.' You know," she added, "Mrs. Chauncey isn't to know anything about it till New Year's Day; nor anybody else."

"Trust me," said John. "If I am asked any quetions they shall find me as obscure as an oracle."

"What is an oracle, sir?"

"Why," said John, smiling, "this pen won't do yet—the old heathens believed there were certain spots of earth to which some of their gods had more favor than to others, and where they would permit mortals to come nearer to them, and would even deign to answer their questions."

"And did they?" said Ellen.

"Did they what?"

"Did they answer their questions?"

"Did *who* answer their questions?"

"The—oh! to be sure," said Ellen,—"there were no such

gods. But what made people think they answered them? and how could they ask questions?"

"I suppose it was a contrivance of the priests to increase their power and wealth. There was always a temple built near, with priests and priestesses; the questions were put through them; and they would not ask them except on great occasions, or for people of consequence who could pay them well by making splendid gifts to the god."

"But I should think the people would have thought the priest or priestess had made up the answers themselves."

"Perhaps they did sometimes. But people had not the Bible then, and did not know as much as we know. It was not unnatural to think the gods would care a little for the poor people that lived on the earth. Besides, there was a good deal of management and trickery about the answers of the oracle that helped to deceive."

"How was it?" said Ellen;—"how could they manage? and what was *the oracle?*"

"The oracle was either the answer itself, or the god who was supposed to give it, or the place where it was given; and there were different ways of managing. At one place the priest hid himself in the hollow body or among the branches of an oak tree, and people thought the tree spoke to them. Sometimes the oracle was delivered by a woman who pretended to be put into a kind of fit—tearing her hair and beating her breast."

"But suppose the oracle made a mistake?—what would the people think then?'

"The answers were generally contrived so that they would seem to come true in any event."

"I don't see how they could do that," said Ellen.

"Very well—just imagine that I am an oracle, and come to me with some question;—I'll answer you."

"But you can't tell what's going to happen?"

"No matter—you ask me truly and I'll answer you oracularly."

That means, like an oracle, I suppose?" said Ellen. "Well—Mr. John, will Alice be pleased with what I am going to give her New Year?"

"She will be pleased with what she will receive on that day."

"Ah but," said Ellen laughing, "that isn't fair; you

haven't answered me; perhaps somebody else will give her something, and then she might be pleased with that and not with mine."

"Exactly—but the oracle never means to be understood."

"Well I won't come to you," said Ellen. "I don't like such answers. Now for the needlebook!"

Breathlessly she looked on while the skillful pen did its work; and her exclamations of delight and admiration when the first cover was handed to her were not loud but deep.

"It will do then, will it? Now let us see—'From her dear little daughter,'—there—now 'Ellen Chauncey' I suppose must be in hieroglyphics."

"In what?" said Ellen.

"I mean, written in some difficult character."

"Yes," said Ellen. "But what was that you said?"

"Hieroglyphics?"

Ellen added no more, though she was not satisfied. He looked up and smiled.

"Do you want to know what that means?"

"Yes, if you please," said Ellen.

The pen was laid down while he explained, to a most eager little listener. Even the great business of the moment was forgotten. From hieroglyphics they went to the pyramids; and Ellen had got to the top of one and was enjoying the prospect, (in imagination) when she suddenly came down to tell John of her stuffed stocking and its contents. The pen went on again, and came to the end of the writing by the time Ellen had got to the toe of the stocking.

"Wasn't it very strange they should give me so many things?" said she;—"people that don't know me?"

"Why no," said John smiling,—"I cannot say I think it was *very* strange. Is this all the business you had for my hands?"

"This is all; and I am *very* much obliged to you, Mr. John."

Her grateful affectionate eye said much more, and he felt well paid.

Gilbert was next applied to, to paint the rose and the butterfly, which, finding so elegant a beginning made in the work, he was very ready to do. The girls were then free to set about the embroidery of the leaves, which was by no means the business of an hour.

A very happy Christmas day was that. With their needles and thimbles, and rose-colored silk, they kept by themselves in a corner, or in the library, out of the way; and sweetening their talk with a sugar-plum now and then, neither tongues nor needles knew any flagging. It was wonderful what they found so much to say, but there was no lack. Ellen Chauncey especially was inexhaustible. Several times too that day the Cologne bottle was handled, the gloves looked at and fondled, the ball tried, and the new scissors extolled as "just the thing for their work." Ellen attempted to let her companion into the mystery of oracles and hieroglyphics, but was fain to give it up; little Ellen showed a decided preference for American, not to say Ventnor, subjects, where she felt more at home.

Then came Mr. Humphreys; and Ellen was glad, both for her own sake and because she loved to see Alice pleased. Then came the great merry Christmas dinner, when the girls had, not talked themselves out, but tired themselves with working. Young and old dined together to-day, and the children not set by themselves but scattered among the grown-up people; and as Ellen was nicely placed between Alice and little Ellen Chauncey, she enjoyed it all very much. The large long table surrounded with happy faces; tones of cheerfulness and looks of kindness, and lively talk; the superb display of plate and glass and china; the stately dinner; and last but not least, the plum pudding. There was sparkling wine too, and a great deal of drinking of healths; but Ellen noticed that Alice and her brother smilingly drank all theirs in water; so when old Mr. Marshman called to her to "hold out her glass," she held it out to be sure and let him fill it, but she lifted her tumbler of water to her lips instead, after making him a very low bow. Mr. Marshman laughed at her a great deal, and asked her if she was "a proselyte to the new notions;" and Ellen laughed with him, without having the least idea what he meant, and was extremely happy. It was very pleasant too when they went into the drawing-room to take coffee. The young ones were permitted to have coffee to-night as a great favor. Old Mrs. Marshman had the two little ones on either side of her; and was so kind, and held Ellen's hand in her own, and talked to her about her mother, till Ellen loved her.

After tea there was a great call for games, and young and old joined in them. They played the Old Curiosity Shop; and Ellen thought Mr. John's curiosities could not be matched. They played the Old Family Coach, Mr. Howard Marshman being the manager, and Ellen laughed till she was tired; she was the coach door, and he kept her opening and shutting and swinging and breaking, it seemed all the while, though most of the rest were worked just as hard. When they were well tired they sat down to rest and hear music, and Ellen enjoyed that exceedingly. Alice sang, and Mrs. Gillespie, and Miss Sophia, and another lady, and Mr. Howard; sometimes alone, sometimes three or four or all together.

At last came ten o'clock and the young ones were sent off; and from beginning to end that had been a Christmas day of unbroken and unclouded pleasure. Ellen's last act was to take another look at her Cologne bottle, gloves, pincushion, grapes, and paper of sugar-plums, which were laid side by side carefully in a drawer.

CHAPTER XXX.

But though life's valley be a vale of tears,
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,
Shoots between scattered rocks and opening shades.

COWPER.

MR. HUMPHREYS was persuaded to stay over Sunday at Ventnor; and it was also settled that his children should not leave it till after New Year. This was less their own wish than his; he said Alice wanted the change, and he wished she looked a little fatter. Beside, the earnest pleadings of the whole family were not to be denied. Ellen was very glad of this, though there was one drawback to the pleasures of Ventnor,—she could not feel quite at home with any of the young people but only Ellen Chauncey and her cousin George Walsh. This seemed very strange to her; she almost thought Margaret Dunscombe was at the bottom of it all, but she recollected she had felt something of this before Margaret came. She tried to think nothing about it; and in truth it was not able to prevent her from being very happy. The breach however was destined to grow wider.

About four miles from Ventnor was a large town called Randolph. Thither they drove to church Sunday morning, the whole family; but the hour of dinner and the distance prevented any one from going in the afternoon. The members of the family were scattered in different parts of the house, most in their own rooms. Ellen with some difficulty made her escape from her young companions, whose manner of spending the time did not satisfy her notions of what was right on that day, and went to look in the library for her friends. They were there, and alone; Alice half reclining on the sofa, half in her brother's arms; he was reading or talking to her; there was a book in his hand.

"Is anything the matter?" said Ellen, as she drew near; "aren't you well, dear Alice?—Headache? oh, I am sorry. O! I know——"

She darted away. In two minutes she was back again with a pleased face, her bunch of grapes in one hand, her bottle of Cologne water in the other.

"Won't you open that, please, Mr. John," said she;—"I can't open it; I guess it will do her good, for Ellen says it's delicious. Mamma used to have Cologne water for her headaches. And here, dear Alice, won't you eat these?—do!—try one."

"Hasn't that bottle been open yet?" said Alice, as she smilingly took a grape.

"Why no, to be sure it hasn't. I wasn't going to open it till I wanted it. Eat them all, dear Alice,—please do!"

"But I don't think you have eaten one yourself, Ellen, by the look of the bunch. And here are a great many too many for me."

"Yes I have, I've eaten two; I don't want 'em. I give them all to you and Mr. John. I had a great deal rather!"

Ellen took however as precious payment Alice's look and kiss; and then with a delicate consciousness that perhaps the brother and sister might like to be alone, she left the library. She did not know where to go, for Miss Sophia was stretched on the bed in her room, and she did not want any company. At last with her little Bible she placed herself on the old sofa in the hall above stairs, which was perfectly well warmed, and for some time she was left there in peace. It was pleasant, after all the hubbub of the morning, to have a little quiet time that seemed like Sunday; and the sweet Bible words came, as they often now came to Ellen, with a healing breath. But after half an hour or so, to her dismay she heard a door open and the whole gang of children come trooping into the hall below, where they soon made such a noise that reading or thinking was out of the question.

"What a bother it is that one can't play games on a Sunday!" said Marianne Gillespie.

"One *can* play games on a Sunday," answered her brother. "Where's the odds? It's all Sunday's good for, *I* think."

"William!—William!" sounded the shocked voice of little Ellen Chauncey,—"you are a real wicked boy!"

"Well now!" said William,—"how am I wicked? Now say,—I should like to know. How is it any more wicked for us to play games than it is for aunt Sophia to lie abed and sleep, or for uncle Howard to read novels, or for grandpa to talk politics, or for mother to talk about the fashions?—there were she and Miss What's-her-name for ever so long this morning doing everything but *make* a dress. Now which is the worst?"

"O, William!—William!—for shame! for shame!" said Ellen again.

"Do hush, Ellen Chauncey! will you?" said Marianne sharply;—"and you had better hush too, William, if you know what is good for yourself. I don't care whether it's right or wrong, I do get dolefully tired with doing nothing."

"Oh so do I!" said Margaret yawning. "I wish one could sleep all Sunday."

"I'll tell you what," said George, "I know a game we can play, and no harm either, for it's all out of the Bible."

"O do you? let's hear it, George," cried the girls.

"I don't believe it is good for anything if it is out of the Bible," said Margaret. "Now stare, Ellen Chauncey, do!"

"I *aint* staring," said Ellen indignantly,—"but I don't believe it is right to play it, if it *is* out of the Bible."

"Well it is though," said George. "Now listen;—I'll think of somebody in the Bible,—some man or woman, you know; and you all may ask me twenty questions about him to see if you can find out who it is."

"What kind of questions?"

"Any kind of questions—whatever you like."

"That will improve your knowledge of scripture history," said Gilbert.

"To be sure; and exercise our memory," said Isabel Hawthorn.

"Yes, and then we are thinking of good people and what they did, all the time," said little Ellen.

"Or bad people and what they did;" said William.

"But I don't know enough about people and things in the Bible," said Margaret; "I couldn't guess."

"O never mind—it will be all the more fun," said George. "Come! let's begin. Who'll take somebody?"

"O I think this will be fine!" said little Chauncey;—"but Ellen—where's Ellen?—we want her."

"No we don't want her!—we've enough without her—she won't play!" shouted William, as the little girl ran up stairs. She persevered however. Ellen had left her sofa before this, and was found seated on the foot of her bed. As far and as long as she could she withstood her little friend's entreaties, and very unwillingly at last yielded and went with her down stairs.

"Now we are ready," said little Ellen Chauncey; "I have told Ellen what the game is; who's going to begin?"

"We have begun," said William. "Gilbert has thought of somebody. Man or woman?"

"Man."

"Young or old?"

"Why—he was young first and old afterwards."

"Pshaw, William! what a ridiculous question," said his sister. "Besides you mustn't ask more than one at a time. Rich or poor, Gilbert?"

"Humph!—why I suppose he was moderately well off. I dare say I should think myself a lucky fellow if I had as much."

"Are you answering truly, Gilbert?"

"Upon my honor!"

"Was he in a high or low station of life," asked Miss Hawthorn?"

"Neither at the top nor the bottom of the ladder—a very respectable person indeed."

"But we are not getting on," said Margaret; "according to you he wasn't anything in particular; what kind of a person was he, Gilbert?"

"A very good man."

"Handsome or ugly?"

"History don't say."

"Well, what *does* it say?" said George—"what did he do?"

"He took a journey once upon a time."

"What for?"

"Do you mean *why* he went, or what was the *object* of his going?"

"Why the one's the same as the other, aint it?"

"I beg your pardon."

"Well, what was the object of his going?"

"He went after a wife."

"Samson! Samson!" shouted William and Isabel and Ellen Chauncey.

"No—it wasn't Samson either."

"I can't think of anybody else that went after a wife," said George. "That king—what's his name?—that married Esther?"

The children screamed. "*He* didn't go after a wife, George,—his wives were brought to him. Was it Jacob?"

"No—he didn't go after a wife either," said Gilbert; "he married two of them, but he didn't go to his uncle's to find them. You had better go on with your questions. You have had eight already. If you don't look out you won't catch me. Come!"

"Did he get the wife that he went after?" asked Ellen Chauncey.

"He was never married that I know of," said Gilbert.

"What was the reason he failed?" said Isabel.

"He did not fail."

"Did he bring home his wife then? you said he wasn't married."

"He never was, that I know of; but he brought home a wife notwithstanding."

"But how funny you are, Gilbert," said little Ellen,—"he had a wife and he hadn't a wife;—what became of her?"

"She lived and flourished. Twelve questions;—take care."

"Nobody asked what country he was of," said Margaret,—"what was he, Gilbert?"

"He was a Damascene.

"A *what?*"

"Of Damascus—of Damascus. You know where Damascus is, don't you?"

"Fiddle!" said Marianne,—"I thought he was a Jew. Did he live before or after the flood?"

"After. I should think you might have known that."

"Well, I can't make out anything about him," said Marianne. "We shall have to give it up."

"No, no,—not yet," said William. "Where did he go after his wife?"

"Too close a question."

"Then that don't count. Had he ever seen her before?"

"Never."

"Was she willing to go with him?"

"Very willing. Ladies always are when they go to be married."

"And what became of her?"

"She was married and lived happily,—as I told you."

"But you said *he* wasn't married?"

"Well, what then? I didn't say she married *him*."

"Whom did she marry?"

"Ah that is asking the whole; I can't tell you."

"Had they far to go?" asked Isabel.

"Several days' journey,—I don't know how far."

"How did they travel?"

"On camels."

"Was it the Queen of Sheba!" said little Ellen.

There was a roar of laughter at this happy thought, and poor little Ellen declared she forgot all but about the journey; she remembered the Queen of Sheba had taken a journey, and the camels in the picture of the Queen of Sheba, and that made her think of her.

The children gave up. Questioning seemed hopeless; and Gilbert at last told them his thought. It was Eleazar, Abraham's steward, whom he sent to fetch a wife for his son Isaac.

"Why haven't *you* guessed, little mumchance?" said Gilbert to Ellen Montgomery.

"I have guessed," said Ellen;—"I knew who it was some time ago."

"Then why didn't you say so? and you haven't asked a single question," said George.

"No, you haven't asked a single question," said Ellen Chauncey.

"She is a great deal too good for that," said William; "she thinks it is wicked, and that we are not at all nice proper-behaved boys and girls to be playing on Sunday; she is very sorry she could not help being amused."

"*Do* you think it is wicked, Ellen?" asked her little friend.

"Do you think it isn't right?" said George Walsh.

Ellen hesitated; she saw they were all waiting to hear what she would say. She colored, and looked down at her little Bible which was still in her hand. It encouraged her.

"I don't want to say anything rude," she began;—"I don't think it is quite right to play such plays, or any plays."

She was attacked with impatient cries of "Why not?" "Why not?"

"Because," said Ellen, trembling with the effort she made,—"I think Sunday was meant to be spent in growing better and learning good things; and I don't think such plays would help one at all to do that; and I have a kind of *feeling* that I ought not to do it."

"Well I hope you'll act according to your *feelings* then," said William; "I am sure nobody has any objection. You had better go somewhere else though, for we are going on; we have been learning to be good long enough for one day. Come! I have thought of somebody."

Ellen could not help feeling hurt and sorry at the half sneer she saw in the look and manner of the others as well as in William's words. She wished for no better than to go away, but as she did so her bosom swelled and the tears started and her breath came quicker. She found Alice lying down and asleep, Miss Sophia beside her; so she stole out again and went down to the library. Finding nobody, she took possession of the sofa and tried to read again; reading somehow did not go well, and she fell to musing on what had just passed. She thought of the unkindness of the children; how sure she was it was wrong to spend any part of Sunday in such games; what Alice would think of it, and John, and her mother; and how the Sundays long ago used to be spent, when that dear mother was with her; and then she wondered how *she* was passing this very one,—while Ellen was sitting here in the library alone, what *she* was doing in that far-away land; and she thought if there only *were* such things as oracles that could tell truly, how much she should like to ask about her.

"Ellen!" said the voice of John from the window.

She started up; she had thought she was alone; but there he was lying in the window seat.

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing," said Ellen.

"Come here. What are you thinking about? I didn't know you were there till I heard two or three very long sighs. What is the matter with my little sister?"

He took her hand and drew her fondly up to him. "What were you thinking about?"

"I was thinking about different things,—nothing is the matter," said Ellen.

"Then what are those tears in your eyes for?"

"I don't know," said she laughing,—"there weren't any till I came here. I was thinking just now about mamma."

He said no more, still however keeping her beside him.

"I should think," said Ellen presently, after a few minutes' musing look out of the window,—"it would be very pleasant if there were such things as oracles—don't you, Mr. John?"

"No."

"But wouldn't you like to know something about what's going to happen?"

"I do know a great deal about it."

"About what is going to happen!"

He smiled.

"Yes—a great deal, Ellie,—enough to give me work for all the rest of my life."

"O you mean from the Bible!—I was thinking of other things."

"It is best not to know the other things Ellie;—I am very glad to know those the Bible teaches us."

"But it doesn't tell us much, does it? What does it tell us?"

"Go to the window and tell me what you see."

"I don't see anything in particular," said Ellen, after taking a grave look-out.

"Well, what in general?"

"Why there is the lawn covered with snow, and the trees and bushes; and the sun is shining on everything just as it did the day we came; and there's the long shadow of that hemlock across the snow, and the blue sky."

"Now look out again Ellie, and listen. I know that a day is to come when those heavens shall be wrapped together as a

scroll—they shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment;—and it and all the works that are therein shall be burned up."

As he spoke Ellen's fancy tried to follow,—to picture the ruin and desolation of all that stood so fair and seemed to stand so firm before her;—but the sun shone on, the branches waved gently in the wind, the shadows lay still on the snow, and the blue heaven was fair and cloudless. Fancy was baffled. She turned from the window.

"Do you believe it?" said John.

"Yes," said Ellen,—"I know it; but I think it is very disagreeable to think about it."

"It would be, Ellie," said he, bringing her again to his side,—"very disagreeable—very miserable indeed, if we knew no more than that. But we know more—read here."

Ellen took his little Bible and read at the open place.

"'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, neither come into mind.'"

"Why won't they be remembered?" said Ellen;—"shall we forget all about them?"

"No, I do not think that is meant. The new heavens and the new earth will be so much more lovely and pleasant that we shall not want to think of these."

Ellen's eye sought the window again.

"You are thinking that is hardly possible?" said John with a smile.

"I suppose it is *possible*," said Ellen,—"but—"

"But lovely as this world is, Ellie, man has filled it with sin, and sin has everywhere brought its punishment, and under the weight of both the earth groans. There will be no sin *there;* sorrow and sighing shall flee away; love to each other and love to their blessed King will fill all hearts, and his presence will be with them. Don't you see that even if that world shall be in itself no better than this, it will yet be far, far more lovely than this can ever be with the shadow of sin upon it?"

"O yes!" said Ellen. "I know whenever I feel wrong in any way nothing seems pretty or pleasant to me, or not half so much."

"Very well," said John,—"I see you understand me. I like to think of that land, Ellen,—very much."

"Mr. John," said Ellen,—"don't you think people will know each other again?"

"Those that love each other here?—I have no doubt of it."

Before either John or Ellen had broken the long musing fit that followed these words, they were joined by Alice. Her head was better; and taking her place in the window-seat, the talk began again, between the brother and sister now; Ellen too happy to sit with them and listen. They talked of that land again, of the happy company preparing for it; of their dead mother, but not much of her; of the glory of their King, and the joy of his service, even here;—till thoughts grew too strong for words, and silence again stole upon the group. The short winter day came to an end; the sunlight faded away into moonlight. No shadows lay now on the lawn; and from where she sat Ellen could see the great hemlock all silvered with the moonlight which began to steal in at the window. It was very, very beautiful;—yet she could think now without sorrow that all this should come to an end; because of that new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness should dwell.

"We have eaten up all your grapes, Ellie," said Alice,—or rather *I* have, for John didn't help me much. I think I never ate so sweet grapes in my life; John said the reason was because every one tasted of you."

"I am very glad," said Ellen laughing.

"There is no evil without some good," Alice went on;—"except for my headache John would not have held my head by the hour as he did; and you couldn't have given me the pleasure you did, Ellie. Oh Jack!—there has been many a day lately when I would gladly have had a headache for the power of laying my head on your shoulder!"

"And if mamma had not gone away I should never have known you," said Ellen. "I wish she never *had* gone, but I am very, very glad for this!"

She had kneeled upon the window-seat and clasped Alice round the neck, just as they were called to tea. The conversation had banished every disagreeable feeling from Ellen's mind. She met her companions in the drawing-room almost

forgetting that she had any cause of complaint against them. And this appeared when in the course of the evening it came in her way to perform some little office of politeness for Marianne. It was done with the gracefulness that could only come from a spirit entirely free from ungraceful feelings. The children felt it, and for the time were shamed into better behavior. The evening passed pleasantly, and Ellen went to bed very happy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"The ancient heroes were illustrious,
For being benign, and not blustrous."

HUDIBRAS.

THE next day it happened that the young people were amusing themselves with talking in a room where John Humphreys, walking up and down, was amusing *himself* with thinking. In the course of his walk he began to find their amusement rather disturbing to his. The children were all grouped closely round Margaret Dunscombe, who was entertaining them with a long and very detailed account of a wedding and great party at Randolph which she had had the happiness of attending. Eagerly fighting her battles over again, and pleased with the rapt attention of her hearers, the speaker forgot herself and raised her voice much more than she meant to do. As every turn of his walk brought John near, there came to his ears sufficient bits and scraps of Margaret's story to give him a very fair sample of the whole; and he was sorry to see Ellen among the rest, and as the rest, hanging upon her lips and drinking in what seemed to him to be very poor nonsense. "Her gown was all blue satin, trimmed here,—and so,—you know, with the most *exquisite* lace, as deep as that,—and on the shoulders and here—you know, it was looped up with the most lovely bunches of"—here John lost the sense. When he came near again she had got upon a different topic—"Miss Simmons," says I, "what did you do that for?" "Why," says she, "how could I help it? I saw Mr. Pyne coming, and I thought I'd get behind you, and so ——." The next time the speaker was saying with great animation, "And lo, and behold, when I was in the midst of all my pleasure, up comes a little gentleman of about his dimensions ——." He had not taken many turns when he saw that Margaret's nonsense was branching out right and left into worse than nonsense.

"Ellen!" said he suddenly,—"I want you in the library."

"My conscience!" said Margaret as he left the room,—"King John the Second, and no less."

"Don't go on till I come back," said Ellen; "I won't be three minutes; just wait for me."

She found John seated at one of the tables in the library, sharpening a pencil.

"Ellen," said he in his usual manner,—"I want you to do something for me."

She waited eagerly to hear what, but instead of telling her he took a piece of drawing paper and began to sketch something. Ellen stood by, wondering and impatient to the last degree; not caring however to show her impatience, though her very feet were twitching to run back to her companions.

"Ellen," said John as he finished the old stump of a tree with one branch left on it, and a little bit of ground at the bottom, "did you ever try your hand at drawing?"

"No," said Ellen.

"Then sit down here," said he rising from his chair, "and let me see what you can make of that."

"But I don't know how," said Ellen.

"I will teach you. There is a piece of paper, and this pencil is sharp enough. Is that chair too low for you?"

He placed another, and with extreme unwillingness and some displeasure Ellen sat down. It was on her tongue to ask if another time would not do, but somehow she could not get the words out. John showed her how to hold her pencil, how to place her paper, where to begin and how to go on; and then went to the other end of the room and took up his walk again. Ellen at first felt more inclined to drive her pencil *through* the paper then to make quiet marks upon it. However necessity was upon her. She began her work; and once fairly begun it grew delightfully interesting. Her vexation went off entirely; she forgot Margaret and her story; the wrinkles on the old trunk smoothed those on her brow, and those troublesome leaves at the branch end brushed away all thoughts of everything else. Her cheeks were burning with intense interest, when the library door burst open and the whole troop of children rushed in; they wanted Ellen for a round game in which all their number were needed; she must come directly.

"I can't come just yet," said she; "I must finish this first."

"Afterwards will just do as well," said George;—"come Ellen, do!—you can finish it afterwards."

"No I can't," said Ellen,—"I can't leave it till it's done. Why I thought Mr. John was here! I didn't see him go out. I'll come in a little while."

"Did *he* set you about that precious piece of business?" said William.

"Yes."

"I declare," said Margaret,—"he's fitter to be the Grand Turk than any one else I know of."

"I don't know who the Grand Turk is," said Ellen.

"I'll tell you," said William, putting his mouth close to her ear, and speaking in a disagreeable loud whisper,—"it's the biggest gobbler in the yard."

"Aint you ashamed William!" cried little Ellen Chauncey.

"That's it exactly," said Margaret,—"always strutting about."

"He isn't a bit," said Ellen very angry; "I've seen people a great deal more like gobblers than he is."

"Well," said William, reddening in his turn, "I had rather at any rate be a good turkey gobbler than one of those outlandish birds that have an appetite for stones and glass and bits of morocco, and such things. Come, let's us leave her to do the Grand Turk's bidding. Come Ellen Chauncey—you mustn't stay to interrupt her—we want you!"

They left her alone. Ellen had colored, but William's words did not hit very sore; since John's talk with her about the matter referred to she had thought of it humbly and wisely; it is only pride that makes such fault-finding very hard to bear. She was very sorry however that they had fallen out again, and that her own passion, as she feared, had been the cause. A few tears had to be wiped away before she could see exactly how the old tree stood,—then taking up her pencil she soon forgot everything in her work. It was finished, and with head now on one side, now on the other, she was looking at her picture with very great satisfaction, when her eye caught the figure of John standing before her.

"Is it done?" said he.

"It is done," said Ellen smiling, as she rose up to let him come. He sat down to look at it.

"It is very well," he said,—"better than I expected,—it is very well indeed. Is this your *first* trial, Ellen?"

"Yes—the first."

"You found it pleasant work?"

"O very!—very pleasant. I like it dearly."

"Then I will teach you. This shows you have a taste for it, and that is precisely what I wanted to find out. I will give you an easier copy next time. I rather expected when you sat down," said he, smiling a little, "that the old tree would grow a good deal more crooked under your hands than I meant it to be."

Ellen blushed exceedingly. "I do believe, Mr. John," said she, stammering, "that you know everything I am thinking about."

"I might do that, Ellen, without being as wise as an oracle. But I do not expect to make any very painful discoveries in that line."

Ellen thought, if he did not, it would not be her fault. She truly repented her momentary anger and hasty speech to William. Not that he did not deserve it, or that it was not true; but it was unwise, and had done mischief, and "it was not a bit like peacemaking, nor meek at all," Ellen said to herself. She had been reading that morning the fifth chapter of Matthew, and it ran in her head, "Blessed are the meek,"—"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." She strove to get back a pleasant feeling toward her young companions, and prayed that she might not be angry at anything they should say. She was tried again at tea-time.

Miss Sophia had quitted the table, bidding William hand the doughnuts to those who could not reach them. Marianne took a great while to make her choice. Her brother grew impatient.

"Well I hope you have suited yourself," said he. "Come, Miss Montgomery, don't you be as long; my arm is tired. Shut your eyes, and then you'll be sure to get the biggest one in the basket."

"No Ellen," said John, who none of the children thought was near,—"it would be ungenerous—I wouldn't deprive Master William of his best arguments."

"What do you mean by my arguments?" said William sharply.

"Generally, those which are the most difficult to take in," answered his tormentor with perfect gravity.

Ellen tried to keep from smiling, but could not; and others of the party did not try. William and his sister were enraged, the more because John had said nothing they could take hold of, or even repeat. Gilbert made common cause with them.

"I wish I was grown up for once," said William.

"Will you fight *me* sir?" asked Gilbert, who was a matter of three years older, and well grown enough.

His question received no answer, and was repeated.

"No, sir."

"Why not sir?"

"I am afraid you'd lay me up with a sprained ankle," said John, "and I should not get back to Doncaster as quickly as I must."

"It is very mean of him," said Gilbert, as John walked away,—"I could whip him I know."

"Who's that?" said Mr. Howard Marshman.

"John Humphreys."

"John Humphreys! You had better not meddle with him my dear fellow. It would be no particular proof of wisdom."

"Why he is no such great affair," said Gilbert; "he's tall enough to be sure, but I don't believe he is heavier than I am."

"You don't know, in the first place, how to judge of the size of a perfectly well-made man; and in the second place *I* was not a match for him a year ago; so you may judge.—I do not know precisely," he went on to the lady he was walking with, "what it takes to rouse John Humphreys, but when he *is* roused he seems to me to have strength enough for twice his bone and muscle. I have seen him do curious things once or twice!"

"That quiet Mr. Humphreys?"

"Humph!" said Mr. Howard,—"gunpowder is pretty quiet stuff so long as it keeps cool."

The next day another matter happened to disturb Ellen. Margaret had received an elegant pair of ear-rings as a Christmas present, and was showing them for the admiration of her young friends. Ellen's did not satisfy her.

"Aint they splendid?" said she. "Tell the truth now

Ellen Montgomery, wouldn't you give a great deal if somebody would send you such a pair?"

"They are very pretty," said Ellen, "but I don't think I care much for such things,—I would rather have the money."

"O you avaricious!—Mr. Marshman!" cried Margaret, as the old gentleman was just then passing through the room, —"here's Ellen Montgomery says she'd rather have money than anything else for *her* present."

He did not seem to hear her, and went out without making any reply.

"O Margaret!" said Ellen, shocked and distressed,—"how could you! how could you! What will Mr. Marshman think?"

Margaret answered she didn't care what he thought. Ellen could only hope he had not heard.

But a day or two after, when neither Ellen nor her friends were present, Mr. Marshman asked who it was that had told him Ellen Montgomery would like money better than anything else for her New Year's present."

"It was I, sir," said Margaret.

"It sounds very unlike her to say so," remarked Mrs. Chauncey.

"Did she say so?" inquired Mr. Marshman.

"I understood her so," said Margaret,—"I understood her to say she wouldn't care for anything else."

"I am disappointed in her," said the old gentleman; "I wouldn't have believed it."

"I do not believe it," said Mrs. Chauncey quietly; "there has been some mistake."

It was hard for Ellen now to keep to what she thought right. Disagreeable feelings would rise when she remembered the impoliteness, the half sneer, the whole taunt, and the real unkindness of several of the young party. She found herself ready to be irritated, inclined to dislike the sight of those, even wishing to visit some sort of punishment upon them. But Christian principle had taken strong hold in little Ellen's heart; she fought her evil tempers manfully. It was not an easy battle to gain. Ellen found that resentment and pride had roots deep enough to keep her pulling up the shoots for a good while. She used to get alone when she could, to read a verse, if no more, of her Bible, and pray; she could forgive William and Margaret more easily then.

Solitude and darkness saw many a prayer and tear of hers that week. As she struggled thus to get rid of sin and to be more like what would please God, she grew humble and happy. Never was such a struggle carried on by faith in him, without success. And after a time, though a twinge of the old feeling might come, it was very slight; she would bid William and Margaret good morning, and join them in any enterprise of pleasure or business, with a brow as unclouded as the sun. They however were too conscious of having behaved unbecomingly towards their little stranger guest to be over fond of her company. For the most part she and Ellen Chauncey were left to each other.

Meanwhile the famous needlebook was in a fair way to be finished. Great dismay had at first been excited in the breast of the intended giver, by the discovery that Gilbert had consulted what seemed to be a very extraordinary fancy, in making the rose a yellow one. Ellen did her best to comfort her. She asked Alice, and found there were such things as yellow roses, and they were very beautiful too; and besides it would match so nicely the yellow butterfly on the other leaf.

"I had rather it wouldn't match!" said Ellen Chauncey; —"and it don't match the rose-colored silk besides. Are the yellow roses sweet?"

"No," said Ellen,—"but *this* couldn't have been a sweet rose at any rate, you know."

"Oh but," said the other, bursting out into a fresh passion of inconsolable tears,—"I wanted it should be the *picture* of a sweet rose!—And I think he might have put a purple butterfly—yellow butterflies are so common! I had a great deal rather have had a purple butterfly and a red rose!"

What cannot be cured, however, must be endured. The tears were dried, in course of time, and the needlebook with its yellow pictures and pink edges was very neatly finished. Ellen had been busy too on her own account. Alice had got a piece of fine linen for her from Miss Sophia; the collar for Mr. Van Brunt had been cut out, and Ellen with great pleasure had made it. The stitching, the strings, and the very button-hole, after infinite pains, were all finished by Thursday night. She had also made a needlecase for Alice, not of so much pretension as the other one; this was green morocco

lined with crimson satin; no leaves, but ribbon stitched in to hold papers of needles, and a place for a bodkin. Ellen worked very hard at this; it was made with the extremest care, and made beautifully. Ellen Chauncey admired it very much, and anew lamented the uncouth variety of colors in her own. It was a grave question whether pink or yellow ribbons should be used for the latter; Ellen Montgomery recommended pink, she herself inclined to yellow; and tired of doubting, at last resolved to split the difference and put one string of each color. Ellen thought that did not mend matters, but wisely kept her thoughts to herself. Besides the needlecase for Alice, she had snatched the time whenever she could get away from Ellen Chauncey to work at something for her. She had begged Alice's advice and help; and between them, out of Ellen's scraps of morocco and silk, they had manufactured a little bag of all the colors of the rainbow, and very pretty and tasteful withal. Ellen thought it a chef-d'œuvre, and was unbounded in her admiration. It lay folded up in white paper in a locked drawer ready for New Year's day. In addition to all these pieces of business John had begun to give her drawing lessons, according to his promise. These became Ellen's delight. She would willingly have spent much more time upon them than he would allow her. It was the most loved employment of the day. Her teacher's skill was not greater than the perfect gentleness and kindness with which he taught. Ellen thought of Mr. Howard's speech about gunpowder,—she could not understand it.

"What is your conclusion on the whole?" asked John one day, as he stood beside her mending a pencil.

"Why," said Ellen, laughing and blushing,—"how *could* you guess what I was thinking about, Mr. John?"

"Not very difficult, when you are eyeing me so hard."

"I was thinking," said Ellen,—"I don't know whether it is right in me to tell it—because somebody said you"—

"Well?"

"Were like gunpowder."

"Very kind of somebody! And so you have been in doubt of an explosion?"

"No—I don't know—I wondered what he meant."

"Never believe what you hear said of people, Ellen; judge

for yourself. Look here—that house has suffered from a severe gale of wind, I should think—all the uprights are slanting off to the right—can't you set it up straight?"

Ellen laughed at the tumble-down condition of her house as thus pointed out to her, and set about reforming it.

It was Thursday afternoon that Alice and Ellen were left alone in the library, several of the family having been called out to receive some visitors; Alice had excused herself, and Ellen as soon as they were gone nestled up to her side.

"How pleasant it is to be alone together, dear Alice!—I don't have you even at night now.

"It is very pleasant, dear Ellie! Home will not look disagreeable again, will it? even after all our gayety here."

"No indeed!—at least *your* home won't—I don't know what mine will. Oh me! I had almost forgotten aunt Fortune!—"

"Never mind, dear Ellie! You and I have each something to bear—we must be brave and bear it manfully. There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, you know. We sha'n't be unhappy if we do our duty and love Him."

"How soon is Mr. John going away?"

"Not for all next week. And so long as he stays, I do not mean that you shall leave me."

Ellen cried for joy.

"I can manage it with Miss Fortune I know," said Alice. "These fine drawing lessons must not be interrupted. John is very much pleased with your performances."

"Is he?" said Ellen delighted;—"I have taken all the pains I could."

"That is the sure way to success, Ellie. But, Ellie, I want to ask you about something. What was that you said to Margaret Dunscombe about wanting money for a New Year's present?"

"You know it then!" cried Ellen, starting up. "O I'm so glad! I wanted to speak to you about it so I didn't know what to do, and I thought I oughtn't to. What shall I do about it, dear Alice? How did you know? George said you were not there."

"Mrs. Chauncey told me; she thought there had been some mistake, or something wrong;—how was it, Ellen?"

"Why," said Ellen, "she was showing us her ear-rings, and asking us what we thought of them, and she asked me if I wouldn't like to have such a pair; and I thought I would a great deal rather have the money they cost, to buy other things with, you know, that I would like better; and I said so; and just then Mr. Marshman came in, and she called out to him, loud, that I wanted money for a present, or would like it better than anything else, or something like that. O, Alice, how I felt! I was frightened;—but then I hoped Mr. Marshman did not hear her, for he did not say anything; but the next day George told me all about what she had been saying in there, and O, it made me so unhappy!" said poor Ellen, looking very dismal. "What *will* Mr. Marshman think of me? he will think I expected a present, and I never *dreamed* of such a thing! it makes me ashamed to speak of it even; and I *can't bear* he should think so—I can't bear it! What shall I do, dear Alice?"

"I don't know what you can do, dear Ellie, but be patient. Mr. Marshman will not think anything very hard of you, I dare say."

"But I think he does already; he hasn't kissed me since that as he did before; I know he does, and I dont know what to do. How could Margaret say that! oh how could she! it was very unkind.—What can I do?" said Ellen again, after a pause, and wiping away a few tears. "Couldn't Mrs. Chauncey tell Mr. Marshman not to give me anything, for that I never expected it, and would a great deal rather not?"

"Why no, Ellie, I do not think that would be exactly the best or most dignified way."

"What then, dear Alice? I'll do just as you say."

"I would just remain quiet."

"But Ellen says the things are all put on the plates in the morning; and if there should be money on mine—I don't know what I should do, I should feel so badly. I couldn't keep it, Alice!—I couldn't!"

"Very well—you need not—but remain quiet in the meanwhile; and if it should be so, then say what you please, only take care that you say it in a right spirit and in a right manner. Nobody can hurt you much, my child, while you keep the even path of duty; poor Margaret is her own worst enemy."

"Then if there should be money in the morning, I may tell Mr. Marshman the truth about it?"

"Certainly—only do not be in haste; speak gently."

"Oh I wish everybody would be kind and pleasant always!" said poor Ellen, but half comforted.

"What a sigh was there!" said John, coming in. "What is the matter with my little sister?"

"Some of the minor trials of life, John," said Alice, with a smile.

"What is the matter, Ellie?"

"O, something you can't help," said Ellen.

"And something I mustn't know. Well, to change the scene,—suppose you go with me to visit the greenhouse and hot-houses. Have you see them yet?"

"No," said Ellen, as she eagerly sprang forward to take his hand;—"Ellen promised to go with me, but we have been so busy."

"Will you come, Alice?"

"Not I," said Alice,—"I wish I could, but I shall be wanted elsewhere.

"By whom I wonder so much as by me," said her brother. "However, after to-morrow I will have you all to myself."

As he and Ellen were crossing the hall they met Mrs. Marshman.

"Where are you going, John?" said she.

"Where I ought to have been before, ma'am,—to pay my respects to Mr. Hutchinson."

"You've not seen him yet! that is very ungrateful of you. Hutchinson is one of your warmest friends and admirers. There are few people he mentions with so much respect, or that he is so glad to see, as Mr. John Humphreys."

"A distinction I owe, I fear, principally to my English blood," said John shaking his head.

"It is not altogether that," said Mrs. Marshman laughing; "though I do believe I am the only Yankee good Hutchinson has ever made up his mind entirely to like. But go and see him, do, he will be very much pleased."

"Who is Mr. Hutchinson?" said Ellen as they went on.

"He is the gardener, or rather the head gardener. He came out with his master some thirty or forty years ago, but

his old English prejudice, will go to the grave with him, I believe."

"But why don't he like the Americans?"

John laughed. "It would never do for me to attempt to answer that question, Ellie; fond of going to the bottom of things as you are. We should just get to hard fighting about tea-time, and should barely make peace by mid-day to-morrow at the most moderate calculation. You shall have an answer to your question however."

Ellen could not conceive what he meant, but resolved to wait for his promised answer.

As they entered the large and beautifully kept greenhouse Hutchinson came from the further end of it to meet them; an old man, of most respectable appearance. He bowed very civilly, and then slipped his pruning knife into his left hand to leave the right at liberty for John, who shook it cordially.

"And why 'aven't you been to see me before, Mr. John? I have thought it rather 'ard of you, Miss h'Alice has come several times."

"The ladies have more leisure, Mr. Hutchinson. You look flourishing here."

"Why yes sir,—pretty middling, within doors; but I don't like the climate, Mr. John, I don't like the climate, sir. There's no country like h' England, I believe, for my business. 'Ere's a fine rose, sir,—if you'll step a bit this way—quite a new kind—I got it over last h' autumn—the Palmerston it is. Those are fine buds, sir."

The old man was evidently much pleased to see his visitor, and presently plunged him deep into English politics, for which he seemed to have lost no interest by forty years' life in America. As Ellen could not understand what they were talking about, she quitted John's side and went wandering about by herself. From the moment the sweet aromatic smell of the plants had greeted her she had been in a high state of delight; and now, lost to all the world beside, from the mystery of one beautiful and strange green thing to another, she went wondering and admiring, and now and then timidly advancing her nose to see if something glorious was something sweet too. She could hardly leave a superb cactus, in the petals of which there was such a singular

blending of scarlet and crimson as almost to dazzle her sight; and if the pleasure of smell could intoxicate she would have *reeled* away from a luxuriant daphne odorata in full flower, over which she feasted for a long time. The variety of green leaves alone was a marvel to her; some rough and brown-streaked, some shining as if they were varnished, others of hair-like delicacy of structure,—all lovely. At last she stood still with admiration and almost held her breath before a white Camellia.

"What does that flower make you think of, Ellen?" said John coming up; his friend the gardener had left him to seek a newspaper in which he wished to show him a paragraph.

"I don't know," said Ellen,—"I couldn't think of anything but itself."

"It reminds me of what I ought be—and of what I shall be if I ever see heaven;—it seems to me the emblem of a sinless pure spirit,—looking up in fearless spotlessness. Do you remember what was said to the old Church of Sardis,—'Thou hast a few names that have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.'"

The tears rushed to Ellen's eyes, she felt she was so very unlike this; but Mr. Hutchinson coming back prevented anything more from being said. She looked at the white Camellia; it seemed to speak to her.

"That's the paragraph, sir," said the old gardener, giving the paper to John. "'Ere's a little lady that is fond of flowers, if I don't make a mistake; this is somebody I've not seen before. Is this the little lady little Miss h'Ellen was telling me about?"

"I presume so," said John;—"she is Miss Ellen Montgomery, a sister of mine Mr. Hutchinson, and Mr. Marshman's guest."

"By both names h' entitled to my greatest respect," said the old man, stepping back and making a very low bow to Ellen with his hand upon his heart, at which she could not help laughing. "I am very glad to see Miss h' Ellen; what can I do to make her remember old 'Utchinson? Would Miss h' Ellen like a bouquet?"

Ellen did not venture to say yes, but her blush and sparkling eyes answered him. The old gardener understood her, and was as good as his word. He began with cutting a beau-

tiful sprig of a large purple geranium, then a slip of lemon myrtle. Ellen watched him as the bunch grew in his hand, and could hardly believe her eyes as one beauty after another was added to what became a most elegant bouquet. And most sweet too; to her joy the delicious daphne and fragrant lemon blossom went to make part of it. Her thanks, when it was given her, were made with few words but with all her face; the old gardener smiled, and was quite satisfied that his gift was not thrown away. He afterwards showed them his hot-houses, where Ellen was astonished and very much interested to see ripe oranges and lemons in abundance, and pines too, such as she had been eating since she came to Ventnor, thinking nothing less than that they grew so near home. The grapes had all been cut.

There was to be quite a party at Ventnor in the evening of New Year's day. Ellen knew this, and destined her precious flowers for Alice's adornment. How to keep them in the meanwhile? She consulted Mr. John, and according to his advice took them to Mrs. Bland the housekeeper, to be put in water and kept in a safe place for her till the time. She knew Mrs. Bland, for Ellen Chauncey and she had often gone to her room to work where none of the children would find and trouble them. Mrs. Bland promised to take famous care of the flowers, and said she would do it with the greatest pleasure. Mr. Marshman's guests, she added smiling,—must have everything they wanted.

"What does that mean, Mrs. Bland?" said Ellen.

"Why, you see, Miss Ellen, there's a deal of company always coming, and some is Mrs. Gillespie's friends, and some Mr. Howard's, and some to see Miss Sophia more particularly, and some belong to Mrs. Marshman, or the whole family maybe; but now and then *Mr.* Marshman has an old English friend or so, that he sets the greatest store by; and them he calls *his* guests; and the best in the house is hardly good enough for them, or the country either."

"And so I am one of Mr. Marshman's guests!" said Ellen. "I didn't know what it meant."

She saved out one little piece of rose-geranium from her flowers, for the gratification of her own nose; and skipped away through the hall to rejoin her companions, very light-hearted indeed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That wielded right,
Makes hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

BURNS.

NEW YEAR'S morning dawned.

"How I wish breakfast was over!"—thought Ellen as she was dressing. However, there is no way of getting *over* this life but by going through it; so when the bell rang she went down as usual. Mr. Marshman had decreed that he would not have a confusion of gifts at the breakfast table; other people might make presents in their own way; they must not interfere with his. Needlecases, bags, and so forth, must therefore wait another opportunity; and Ellen Chauncey decided it would just make the pleasure so much longer, and was a great improvement on the old plan. "Happy New Years" and pleasant greetings were exchanged as the party gathered in the breakfast room; pleasure sat on all faces, except Ellen's, and many a one wore a broad smile as they sat down to table. For the napkins were in singular disarrangement this morning; instead of being neatly folded up on the plates, in their usual fashion, they were in all sorts of disorder,—sticking up in curious angles, some high, some low, some half folded, some quite unfolded, according to the size and shape of that which they covered. It was worth while to see that long tableful, and the faces of the company, before yet a napkin was touched. An anxious glance at her own showed Ellen that it lay quite flat; Alice's, which was next, had an odd little rising in the middle, as if there were a small dumpling under it. Ellen was in an agony for this pause to come to an end. It was broken by some of the older persons,

and then in a trice every plate was uncovered. And then what a buzz!—pleasure and thanks and admiration, and even laughter. Ellen dreaded at first to look at her plate; she bethought her however that if she waited long she would have to do it with all eyes upon her; she lifted the napkin slowly —yes—just as she feared—there lay a clean bank note—of what value she could not see, for confusion covered her; the blood rushed to her cheeks and the tears to her eyes. She could not have spoken, and happily it was no time then; everybody else was speaking; she could not have been heard. She had time to cool and recollect herself; but she sat with her eyes cast down, fastened upon her plate and the unfortunate bank bill, which she detested with all her heart. She did not know what Alice had received; she understood nothing that was going on, till Alice touched her and said gently, "Mr. Marshman is speaking to you, Ellen."

"Sir!" said Ellen, starting.

"You need not look so terrified," said Mr. Marshman, smiling,—"I only asked you if your bill was a counterfeit—something seems to be wrong about it."

Ellen looked at her plate and hesitated. Her lip trembled.

"What is it?" continued the old gentleman. "Is anything the matter."

Ellen desperately took up the bill, and with burning cheeks marched to his end of the table.

"I am very much obliged to you sir, but I had a great deal rather not;—if you please—if you will please to be so good as to let me give it back to you—I should be very glad"—

"Why hoity toity!" said the old gentleman,—"what's all this? what's the matter? don't you like it? I thought I was doing the very thing that would please you best of all."

"I am very sorry you should think so, sir," said Ellen, who had recovered a little breath, but had the greatest difficulty to keep back her tears;—"I never thought of such a thing as your giving me anything, sir, till somebody spoke of it; and I had rather never have anything in the world than that you should think what you thought about me."

"What did I think about you?"

"George told me that somebody told you, sir, I wanted money for my present."

"And didn't you say so?"

"Indeed I didn't, sir!" said Ellen with sudden fire. "I never thought of such a thing!"

"What *did* you say then?"

"Margaret was showing us her ear-rings, and she asked me if I wouldn't like to have some like them; and I couldn't help thinking I would a great deal rather have the money they would cost to buy something for Alice; and just when I said so you came in, sir, and she said what she did. I was very much ashamed, I wasn't thinking of you, sir, at all, nor of New Year."

"Then you would like something else better than money."

"No sir, nothing at all if you please. If you'll only be so good as not to give me this I will be very much obliged to you indeed; and please not to think I could be so shameful as you thought I was."

Ellen's face was not to be withstood. The old gentleman took the bill from her hand.

"I will never think anything of you," said he, "but what is the very tip-top of honorable propriety. But you make *me* ashamed now—what am I going to do with this? here have you come and made me a present, and I feel very awkward indeed."

"I don't care what you do with it, sir," said Ellen, laughing, though in imminent danger of bursting into tears;—"I am very glad it is out of *my* hands."

"But you needn't think I am going to let you off so," said he;—"you must give me half-a-dozen kisses at least to prove that you have forgiven me for making so great a blunder."

"Half-a-dozen is too many at once," said Ellen, gayly;—"three now, and three to-night."

So she gave the old gentleman three kisses, but he caught her in his arms and gave her a dozen at least; after which he found out that the waiter was holding a cup of coffee at his elbow, and Ellen went back to her place with a very good appetite for her breakfast.

After breakfast the needlecases were delivered. Both gave the most entire satisfaction. Mrs. Chauncey assured her daughter that she would quite as lief have a yellow as a red rose on the cover, and that she liked the inscription extremely; which the little girl acknowledged to have been a joint device

of her own and Ellen's. Ellen's bag gave great delight and was paraded all over the house.

After the bustle of thanks and rejoicing was at last over, and when she had a minute to herself, which Ellen Chauncey did not give her for a good while, Ellen bethought her of her flowers, —a sweet gift still to be made. Why not make it now? why should not Alice have the pleasure of them all day? A bright thought! Ellen ran forthwith to the housekeeper's room, and after a long admiring look at her treasures, carried them glass and all to the library, where Alice and John often were in the morning alone. Alice thanked her in the way she liked best, and then the flowers were smelled and admired afresh.

"Nothing could have been pleasanter to me, Ellie, except Mr. Marshman's gift."

"And what was that, Alice? I haven't seen it yet."

Alice pulled out of her pocket a small round morocco case, the very thing that Ellen had thought looked like a dumpling under the napkin, and opened it.

"It's Mr. John!" exclaimed Ellen. "O how beautiful!"

Neither of her hearers could help laughing.

"It is very fine, Ellie," said Alice; "you are quite right. Now I know what was the business that took John to Randolph every day, and kept him there so long, while I was wondering at him unspeakably. Kind, kind Mr. Marshman."

"Did Mr. John get anything?"

"Ask him, Ellie."

"Did you get anything, Mr. John?" said Ellen, going up to him where he was reading on the sofa.

"I got this," said John, handing her a little book which lay beside him.

"What is this? Wime's—Wiem's—Life of Washington—Washington? he was—May I look at it?"

"Certainly!"

She opened the book, and presently sat down on the floor where she was by the side of the sofa. Whatever she had found within the leaves of the book, she had certainly lost herself. An hour passed. Ellen had not spoken or moved except to turn over leaves.

"Ellen!" said John.

She looked up, her cheeks colored high.

"What have you found there?" said he, smiling.

"O a great deal! But—did Mr. Marshman give you this?"

"No."

"Oh!" said Ellen, looking puzzled,—"I thought you said you got this this morning."

"No, I got it last night. I got it for you, Ellie."

"For me!" said Ellen, her color deepening very much,—"for me! did you? O thank you!—oh I'm so much obliged to you, Mr. John."

"It is only an answer to one of your questions."

"This! is it?—I don't know what, I am sure. Oh I wish I could do something to please you, Mr. John!"

"You shall, Ellie; you shall give me a brother's right again."

Blushingly Ellen approached her lips to receive one of his grave kisses; and then, not at all displeased, went down on the floor and was lost in her book.

Oh the long joy of that New Year's day!—how shall it be told? The pleasure of that delightful book, in which she was wrapped the whole day; even when called off, as she often was, by Ellen Chauncey to help her in fifty little matters of business or pleasure. These were attended to, and faithfully and cheerfully, but *the book* was in her head all the while. And this pleasure was mixed with Alice's pleasure, the flowers and the miniature, and Mr. Marshman's restored kindness. She never met John's or Alice's eye that day without a smile. Even when she went to be dressed her book went with her, and was laid on the bed within sight, ready to be taken up the moment she was at liberty. Ellen Chauncey lent her a white frock which was found to answer very well with a tuck let out; and Alice herself dressed her. While this was doing, Margaret Dunscombe put her head in at the door to ask Anne, Miss Sophia's maid, if she was almost ready to come and curl her hair.

"Indeed I can't say that I am, Miss Margaret," said Anne. I've something to do for Miss Humphreys, and Miss Sophia hasn't so much as done the first thing towards beginning to get ready yet. It'll be a good hour and more."

Margaret went away exclaiming impatiently that she could get nobody to help her, and would have to wait till everybody was down stairs.

A few minutes after she heard Ellen's voice at the door of her room asking if she might come in.

"Yes—who's that?—what do you want?"

"I'll fix your hair if you'll let me," said Ellen.

"You? I don't believe you can."

"O yes I can; I used to do mamma's very often; I am not afraid if you'll trust me."

"Well, thank you, I don't care if you try then," said Margaret, seating herself,—"it won't do any harm at any rate; and I want to be down stairs before anybody gets here; I think it's half the fun to see them come in. Bless me! you're dressed and all ready."

Margaret's hair was in long thick curls; it was not a trifling matter to dress them. Ellen plodded through it patiently and faithfully, taking great pains, and doing the work well; and then went back to Alice. Margaret's thanks, not very gracefully given, would have been a poor reward for the loss of three-quarters of an hour of pleasure. But Ellen was very happy in having done right. It was no longer time to read; they must go down stairs.

The New Year's party was a nondescript,—young and old together; a goodly number of both were gathered from Randolph and the neighboring country, There were games for the young, dancing for the gay, and a superb supper for all; and the big bright rooms were full of bright faces. It was a very happy evening to Ellen. For a good part of it Mr. Marshman took possession of her, or kept her near him; and his extreme kindness would alone have made the evening pass pleasantly; she was sure he was her firm friend again.

In the course of the evening Mrs. Chauncey found occasion to ask her about her journey up the river, without at all mentioning Margaret or what she had said. Ellen answered that she had come with Mrs. Dunscombe and her daughter.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" asked Mrs. Chauncey.

"Why no ma'am," said Ellen,—"I don't know—it was partly pleasant and partly unpleasant."

"What made it so, love?"

"I had left mamma that morning, and that made me unhappy."

"But you said it was partly pleasant?"

"O that was because I had such a good friend on board,"

said Ellen, her face lighting up, as his image came before her.

"Who was that?"

"I don't know ma'am who he was."

"A stranger to you?"

"Yes ma'am—I never saw him before—I wish I could see him again."

"Where did you find him?"

"I didn't find him—he found me, when I was sitting up on the highest part of the boat."

"And your friends with you?"

"What friends?"

"Mrs. Dunscombe and her daughter."

"No ma'am—they were down in the cabin."

"And what business had you to be wandering about the boat alone?" said Mr. Marshman good-humoredly.

"They were strangers, sir," said Ellen, coloring a little.

"Well so was this man—your friend—a stranger too, wasn't he?"

"O he was a very different stranger," said Ellen smiling, —"and he wasn't a stranger long, besides."

"Well you must tell me more about him,—come, I'm curious;—what sort of a strange friend was this?"

"He wasn't a *strange* friend," said Ellen laughing;—"he was a very, very good friend; he took care of me the whole day; he was very good and very kind."

"What kind of a man?" said Mrs. Chauncey;—"a gentleman?"

"O yes ma'am!" said Ellen looking surprised at the question. "I am sure he was."

"What did he look like?"

Ellen tried to tell, but the portrait was not very distinct.

"What did he wear? Coat or cloak?"

"Coat—dark brown, I think."

"This was in the end of October, wasn't it?"

Ellen thought a moment and answered "yes."

"And you don't know his name?"

"No ma'am; I wish I did."

"I can tell you," said Mrs. Chauncey smiling;—"he is one of my best friends too, Ellen; it is my brother, Mr. George Marshman."

How Ellen's face crimsoned! Mr. Marshman asked how she knew.

"It was then he came up the river, you know, sir; and don't you remember his speaking of a little girl on board the boat who was traveling with strangers, and whom he endeavored to befriend? I had forgotten it entirely till a minute or two ago."

"Miss Margaret Dunscombe!" cried George Walsh, "what kind of a person was that you said Ellen was so fond of when you came up the river?"

"I don't know, nor care," said Margaret. "Somebody she picked up somewhere."

"It was Mr. George Marshman!"

"It wasn't!"

"Uncle George!" exclaimed Ellen Chauncey, running up to the group her cousin had quitted;—"*My* uncle George? Do you know uncle George, Ellen?"

"Very much—I mean—yes," said Ellen.

Ellen Chauncey was delighted. So was Ellen Montgomery. It seemed to bring the whole family nearer to her, and they felt it too. Mrs. Marshman kissed her when she heard it, and said she remembered very well her son's speaking of her, and was very glad to find who it was. And now, Ellen thought, she would surely see him again some time.

The next day they left Ventnor. Ellen Chauncey was very sorry to lose her new friend, and begged she would come again "as soon as she could." All the family said the same. Mr. Marshman told her she must give him a large place in her heart, or he should be jealous of her "strange friend;" and Alice was charged to bring her whenever she came to see them.

The drive back to Carra-carra was scarcely less pleasant than the drive out had been; and home, Ellen said, looked lovely. That is, Alice's home, which she began to think more her own than any other. The pleasure of the past ten days, though great, had not been unmixed; the week that followed was one of perfect enjoyment. In Mr. Humphreys' household there was an atmosphere of peace and purity that even a child could feel, and in which such a child as Ellen throve exceedingly. The drawing lessons went on with great success; other lessons were begun; there were fine long walks,

and charming sleigh-rides, and more than one visit to Mrs. Vawse; and what Ellen perhaps liked best of all, the long evenings of conversation and reading aloud, and bright fire-lights, and brighter sympathy and intelligence and affection. That week did them all good, and no one more than Ellen.

It was a little hard to go back to Miss Fortune's and begin her old life there. She went in the evening of the day John had departed. They were at supper.

"Well!" said Miss Fortune, as Ellen entered,—"have you got enough of visiting? I should be ashamed to go where I wasn't wanted, for my part."

"I haven't, aunt Fortune," said Ellen.

"She's been nowhere but what's done her good," said Mr. Van Brunt; "she's reely growed handsome since she's been away."

"Grown a fiddlestick!" said Miss Fortune.

"She couldn't grow handsomer than she was before," said the old grandmother, hugging and kissing her little granddaughter with great delight;—"the sweetest posie in the garden she always was!"

Mr. Van Brunt looked as if he entirely agreed with the old lady. That, while it made some amends for Miss Fortune's dryness, perhaps increased it. She remarked, that "she thanked heaven she could always make herself contented at home;" which Ellen could not help thinking was a happiness for the rest of the world.

In the matter of the collar, it was hard to say whether the giver or receiver had the most satisfaction. Ellen had begged him not to speak of it to her aunt; and accordingly one Sunday when he came there with it on, both he and she were in a state of exquisite delight. Miss Fortune's attention was at last aroused; she made a particular review of him, and ended it by declaring that "he looked uncommonly dandified, but she could not make out what he had done to himself;" a remark which transported Mr. Van Brunt and Ellen beyond all bounds of prudence.

Nancy's Bible, which had been purchased for her at Randolph, was given to her the first opportunity. Ellen anxiously watched her as she slowly turned it over, her face showing however very decided approbation of the style of the gift. She shook her head once or twice, and then said,

"What did you give this to me for, Ellen?"

"Because I wanted to give you something for New Year," said Ellen,—"and I thought that would be the best thing,—if you would only read it,—it would make you so happy and good."

"*You* are good, I believe," said Nancy, "but I don't expect ever to be myself—I don't think I *could* be. You might as well teach a snake not to wriggle."

"I am not good at all," said Ellen,—"we're none of us good,"—and the tears rose to her eyes,—"but the Bible will teach us how to be. If you'll only read it!—please Nancy, do! say you will read a little every day."

"You don't want me to make a promise I shouldn't keep, I guess, do you?"

"No," said Ellen.

"Well I shouldn't keep that, so I won't promise it; but I tell you what I *will* do,—I'll take precious fine care of it, and keep it always for your sake."

"Well," said Elled sighing,—"I am glad you will even do so much as that. But Nancy—before you begin to read the Bible you may have to go where you never can read it, nor be happy nor good neither."

Nancy made no answer, but walked away, Ellen thought, rather more soberly than usual.

This conversation had cost Ellen some effort. It had not been made without a good deal of thought and some prayer. She could not hope she had done much good, but she had done her duty. And it happened that Mr. Van Brunt, standing behind the angle of the wall, had heard every word.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"If ent he wished, now he longed sore."

FAIRFAX.

ELLEN'S life had nothing to mark it for many months. The rest of the winter passed quietly away, every day being full of employment. At home the state of matters was rather bettered. Either Miss Fortune was softened by Ellen's gentle inoffensive ways, and obedient usefulness; or she had resolved to bear what could not be helped, and make the best of the little inmate she could not get rid of. She was certainly resolved to make the *most* of her. Ellen was kept on the jump a great deal of the time; she was runner of errands and maid of all work; to set the table and clear it was only a trifle in the list of her every day duties; and they were not ended till the last supper dish was put away and the hearth swept up. Miss Fortune never spared herself and never spared Ellen, so long as she had any occasion for her.

There were however long pieces of time that were left free; these Ellen seized for her studies and used most diligently. Urged on by a three or four-fold motive. For the love of them, and for her own sake,—that John might think she had done well,—that she might presently please and satisfy Alice,—above all, that her mother's wishes might be answered. This thought, whenever it came, was a spur to her efforts; so was each of the others; and Christian feeling added another and kept all the rest in force. Without this, indolence might have weakened, or temptation surprised her resolution; little Ellen was open to both; but if ever she found herself growing careless, from either cause, conscience was sure to smite her; and then would rush in all the motives that called upon her to persevere. Soon faithfulness began to bring its reward. With delight she found herself getting the better of difficulties, beginning to see a little through the

mists of ignorance, making some sensible progress on the long road of learning. Study grew delightful; her lessons with Alice one of her greatest enjoyments. And as they were a labor of love to both teacher and scholar, and as it was the aim of each to see quite to the bottom of every matter, where it was possible, and to leave no difficulties behind them on the road which they had not cleared away, no wonder Ellen went forward steadily and rapidly. Reading also became a wonderful pleasure. Weems' Life of Washington was read, and read, and read over again, till she almost knew it by heart; and from that she went to Alice's library, and ransacked it for what would suit her. Happily it was a well picked one, and Ellen could not light upon many books that would do her mischief. For those, Alice's wish was enough; —she never opened them. Furthermore Alice insisted that when Ellen had once fairly begun a book she should go through with it; not capriciously leave it for another, nor have half-a-dozen about at a time. But when Ellen had read it once she commonly wanted to go over it again, and seldom laid it aside until she had sucked the sweetness all out of it.

As for drawing, it could not go on very fast while the cold weather lasted. Ellen had no place at home where she could spread out her paper and copies without danger of being disturbed. Her only chance was at the parsonage. John had put all her pencils in order before he went, and had left her an abundance of copies, marked as she was to take them. They, or some of them, were bestowed in Alice's desk; and whenever Ellen had a spare hour or two, of a fine morning or afternoon, she made the best of her way to the mountain; it made no difference whether Alice were at home or not; she went in, coaxed up the fire, and began her work. It happened many a time that Alice, coming home from a walk or a run in the woods, saw the little hood and cloak on the settee before she opened the glass door, and knew very well how she should find Ellen, bending intently over her desk. These runs to the mountain were very frequent; sometimes to draw, sometimes to recite, always to see Alice and be happy. Ellen grew rosy and hardy, and in spite of her separation from her mother, she was very happy too. Her extreme and varied occupation made this possible. She had no time to indulge useless sorrow; on the contrary, her

thoughts were taken up with agreeable matters, either doing or to be done; and at night she was far too tired and sleepy to lie awake musing. And besides, she hoped that her mother would come back in the spring, or the summer at farthest. It is true Ellen had no liking for the kind of business her aunt gave her; it was oftentimes a trial of temper and patience. Miss Fortune was not the pleasantest work-mistress in the world, and Ellen was apt to wish to be doing something else; but after all this was not amiss. Besides the discipline of character, these trials made the pleasant things with which they were mixed up seem doubly pleasant; the disagreeable parts of her life relished the agreeable wonderfully. After spending the whole morning with Miss Fortune in the depths of housework, how delightful it was to forget all in drawing some nice little cottage with a bit of stone wall and a barrel in front; or to go with Alice, in thought, to the south of France, and learn how the peasants manage their vines and make the wine from them; or run over the Rock of Gibraltar with the monkeys; or at another time, seated on a little bench in the chimney corner, when the fire blazed up well, before the candles were lighted, to forget the kitchen and the supper and her bustling aunt, and sail round the world with Captain Cook. Yes—these things were all the sweeter for being tasted by snatches.

Spring brought new occupation; household labors began to increase in number and measure; her leisure times were shortened. But pleasures were increased too. When the snow went off, and spring-like days began to come, and birds' notes were heard again, and the trees put out their young leaves, and the brown mountains were looking soft and green, Ellen's heart bounded at the sight. The springing grass was lovely to see; dandelions were marvels of beauty; to her each wild wood-flower was a never to be enough admired and loved wonder. She used to take long rambles with Mr. Van Brunt when business led him to the woods, sometimes riding part of the way on the ox-sled. Always a basket for flowers went along; and when the sled stopped, she would wander all around seeking among the piled-up dead leaves for the white wind-flower, and pretty little hang-head Uvularia, and delicate blood-root, and the wild geranium and columbine; and many others the names of which she did not

know. They were like friends to Ellen; she gathered them affectionately as well as admiringly into her little basket, and seemed to purify herself in their pure companionship. Even Mr. Van Brunt came to have an indistinct notion that Ellen and flowers were made to be together. After he found what a pleasure it was to her to go on these expeditions, he made it a point, whenever he was bound to the woods of a fine day, to come to the house for her. Miss Fortune might object as she pleased; he always found an answer; and at last Ellen to her great joy would be told, "Well! go get your bonnet and be off with yourself." Once under the shadow of the big trees, the dried leaves crackling beneath her feet, and alone with her kind conductor,—and Miss Fortune and all in the world that was disagreeable was forgotten—forgotten no more to be remembered till the walk should come to an end. And it would have surprised anybody to hear the long conversations she and Mr. Van Brunt kept up,—he, the silentest man in Thirlwall! Their talk often ran upon trees, among which Mr. Van Brunt was at home, Ellen wanted to become acquainted with them, as well as with the little flowers that grew at their feet; and he tried to teach her how to know each separate kind by the bark and leaf and manner of growth. The pine and hemlock and fir were easily learnt; the white birch too; beyond those at first she was perpetually confounding one with another. Mr. Van Brunt had to go over and over his instructions; never weary, always vastly amused. Pleasant lessons these were! Ellen thought so, and Mr. Van Brunt thought so too.

Then there were walks with Alice, pleasanter still, if that could be. And even in the house Ellen managed to keep a token of spring-time. On her toilet-table, the three uncouth legs of which were now hidden by a neat dimity cover, there always stood a broken tumbler with a supply of flowers. The supply was very varied, it is true; sometimes only a handful of dandelions, sometimes a huge bunch of lilac flowers, which could not be persuaded to stay in the glass without the help of the wall, against which it leaned in very undignified style; sometimes the bouquet was of really delicate and beautiful wild flowers. All were charming in Ellen's eyes.

As the days grew long and the weather warm, Alice and

she began to make frequent trips to the Cat's back, and French came very much into fashion. They generally took Sharp to ease the long way, and rested themselves with a good stay on the mountain. Their coming was always a joy to the old lady. She was dearly fond of them both, and delighted to hear from their lips the language she loved best. After a time they spoke nothing else when with her. She was well qualified to teach them; and indeed her general education had been far from contemptible, though nature had done more for her. As the language grew familiar to them, she loved to tell and they to hear long stories of her youth and native country,—scenes and people so very different from all Ellen had ever seen or heard of; and told in a lively simple style which she could not have given in English, and with a sweet coloring of Christian thought and feeling. Many things made these visits good and pleasant. It was not the least of Alice's and Ellen's joy to carry their old friend something that might be for her comfort in her lonely way of life. For even Miss Fortune now and then told Ellen "she might take a piece of that cheese along with her;" or "she wondered if the old lady would like a little fresh meat?—she guessed she'd cut her a bit of that nice lamb; she wouldn't want but a little piece." A singluar testimony this was to the respect and esteem Mrs. Vawse had from everybody. Miss Fortune very, very seldom was known to take a bit from her own comforts to add to those of another. The ruling passion of this lady was thrift; her next, good housewifery. First, to gather to herself and heap up of what the world most esteems; after that, to be known as the most thorough house-keeper and the smartest woman in Thirlwall.

Ellen made other visits she did not like so well. In the course of the winter and summer she became acquainted with most of the neighborhood. She sometimes went with her aunt to a formal tea-drinking, one, two, three, or four miles off, as the case might be. They were not very pleasant. To some places she was asked by herself; and though the people invariably showed themselves very kind, and did their best to please her, Ellen seldom cared to go a second time; liked even home and Miss Fortune better. There were a few exceptions; Jenny Hitchcock was one of her favorites, and Jane Huff was another; and all of their respective families

came in, with good reason, for a share of her regard, Mr. Juniper indeed excepted. Once they went to a quilting at Squire Dennison's; the house was spotlessly neat and well ordered; the people all kind; but Ellen thought they did not seem to know how to be pleasant. Dan Dennison alone had no stiffness about him. Miss Fortune remarked with pride that even in this family of pretension, as she thought it, the refreshments could bear no comparison with hers. Once they were invited to tea at the Lawsons'; but Ellen told Alice, with much apparent disgust, that she never wanted to go again. Mrs. Van Brunt she saw often. To Thirlwall Miss Fortune never went.

Twice in the course of the summer Ellen had a very great pleasure in the company of little Ellen Chauncey. Once Miss Sophia brought her, and once her mother; and the last time they made a visit of two weeks. On both occasions Ellen was sent for to the parsonage and kept while they stayed; and the pleasure that she and her little friend had together cannot be told. It was unmixed now. Rambling about through the woods and over the fields, no matter where, it was all enchanting; helping Alice garden; helping Thomas make hay, and the mischief they did his haycocks by tumbling upon them, and the patience with which he bore it; the looking for eggs; the helping Margery churn, and the helping each other set tables; the pleasant mornings and pleasant evenings and pleasant mid-days,—it cannot be told. Long to be remembered, sweet and pure, was the pleasure of those summer days, unclouded by a shade of discontent or disagreement on either brow. Ellen loved the whole Marshman family now, for the sake of one, the one she had first known; and little Ellen Chauncey repeatedly told her mother in private that Ellen Montgomery was the very nicest girl she had ever seen. They met with joy and parted with sorrow, entreating and promising, if possible, a speedy meeting again.

Amidst all the improvement and enjoyment of these summer months, and they had a great deal of both for Ellen, there was one cause of sorrow she could not help feeling, and it began to press more and more. Letters,—they came slowly,—and when they came they were not at all satisfactory. Those in her mother's hand dwindled and dwindled, till at last there came only mere scraps of letters from her; and sometimes

after a long interval one from Captain Montgomery would come alone. Ellen's heart sickened with long-deferred hope. She wondered what could make her mother neglect a matter so necessary for her happiness; sometimes she fancied they were traveling about, and it might be inconvenient to write; sometimes she thought, perhaps they were coming home without letting her know, and would suddenly surprise her some day and make her half lose her wits with joy. But they did not come, nor write; and whatever was the reason, Ellen felt it was very sad, and sadder and sadder as the summer went on. Her own letters became pitiful in their supplications for letters; they had been very cheerful and filled with encouraging matter, and in part they were still.

For a while her mind was diverted from this sad subject, and her brow cleared up, when John came home in August. As before, Alice gained Miss Fortune's leave to keep her at the parsonage the whole time of his stay, which was several weeks. Ellen wondered that it was so easily granted, but she was much too happy to spend time in thinking about it. Miss Fortune had several reasons. She was unwilling to displease Miss Humphreys, and conscious that it would be a shame to her to stand openly in the way of Ellen's good. Besides, though Ellen's services were lost for a time, yet she said she got tired of setting her to work; she liked to dash round the house alone, without thinking what somebody else was doing or ought to be doing. In short she liked to have her out of the way for a while. Furthermore, it did not please her that Mr. Van Brunt and her little handmaid were, as she expressed it, "so thick." His first thought and his last thought, she said, she believed were for Ellen, whether he came in or went out; and Miss Fortune was accustomed to be chief, not only in her own house, but in the regards of all who came to it. At any rate the leave was granted and Ellen went.

And now was repeated the pleasure of the first week in January. It would have been increased, but that increase was not possible. There was only the difference between lovely winter and lovely summer weather; it was seldom very hot in Thirlwall. The fields and hills were covered with green instead of white; fluttering leaves had taken the place of snow-covered sprays and sparkling icicles; and for the keen north and brisk northwester, soft summer airs were blowing. Ellen saw no other

difference,—except that perhaps, if it could be, there was something more of tenderness in the manner of Alice and her brother towards her. No little sister could have been more cherished and cared for. If there was a change, Mr. Humphreys shared it. It is true he seldom took much part in the conversation, and seldomer was with them in any of their pursuits or pleasures. He generally kept by himself in his study. But whenever he did speak to Ellen his tone was particularly gentle and his look kind. He sometimes called her "My little daughter," which always gave Ellen great pleasure; she would jump at such times with double zeal to do anything he asked her.

Now drawing went on with new vigor under the eye of her master. And many things beside. John took a great deal of pains with her in various ways. He made her read to him; he helped her and Alice with their French; he went with them to Mrs. Vawse's; and even Mr. Humphreys went there too one afternoon to tea. How much Ellen enjoyed that afternoon! They took with them a great basket of provisions, for Mrs. Vawse could not be expected to entertain so large a party; and borrowed Jenny Hitchcock's pony, which with old John and Sharp mounted three of the company; they took turns in walking. Nobody minded that. The fine weather, the beautiful mountain-top, the general pleasure, Mr. Humphreys' uncommon spirits and talkableness, the oddity of their way of traveling, and of a tea-party up on the "Cat's back," and furthermore, the fact that Nancy stayed at home and behaved very well the whole time, all together filled Ellen's cup of happiness, for the time, as full as it could hold. She never forgot that afternoon. And the ride home was the best of all. The sun was low by the time they reached the plain; long shadows lay across their road; the soft air just stirred the leaves on the branches; stillness and loveliness were over all things; and down the mountain and along the roads through the open country, the whole way, John walked at her bridle; so kind in his care of her, so pleasant in his talk to her, teaching her how to sit in the saddle and hold the reins and whip, and much more important things too, that Ellen thought a pleasanter thing could not be than to ride so. After that they took a great many rides, borrowing Jenny's pony or some other, and explored the

beautiful country far and near. And almost daily John had up Sharp and gave Ellen a regular lesson. She often thought, and sometimes looked, what she had once said to him, "I wish I could do something for *you*, Mr. John;"—but he smiled at her and said nothing.

At last he was gone. And in all the weeks he had been at home, and in many weeks before, no letter had come for Ellen. The thought had been kept from weighing upon her by the thousand pleasures that filled up every moment of his stay; she could not be sad then, or only for a minute; hope threw off the sorrow as soon as it was felt; and she forgot how time flew. But when his visit was over, and she went back to her old place and her old life at her aunt's, the old feeling came back in greater strength. She began again to count the days and the weeks; to feel the bitter unsatisfied longing. Tears would drop down upon her Bible; tears streamed from her eyes when she prayed that God would make her mother well and bring her home to her quickly,—oh quickly!—and little Ellen's face began to wear once more something of its old look.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing,
All the dull deep pain, and constant anguish of patience!

LONGFELLOW.

ONE day in the early part of September, she was standing in front of the house at the little wicket that opened on the road. With her back against the open gate she was gently moving it to and fro, half enjoying the weather and the scene, half indulging the melancholy mood which drove her from the presence of her bustling aunt. The gurgling sound of the brook a few steps off was a great deal more soothing to her ear than Miss Fortune's sharp tones. By and by a horseman came in sight at the far end of the road, and the brook was forgotten. What made Ellen look at him so sharply? Poor child, she was always expecting news. At first she could only see that the man rode a white horse; then, as he came nearer, an odd looped-up hat showed itself,—and something queer in his hand,—what was it? who is it?—The old newsman! Ellen was sure. Yes—she could now see his saddlebags, and the white horse-tail set in a handle with which he was brushing away the flies from his horse; the tin trumpet was in his other hand, to blow withal. He was a venerable old figure, with all his oddities; clad in a suit of snuff brown, with a neat quiet look about him, he and the saddlebags and the white horse jogged on together as if they belonged to nothing else in the world but each other. In an ecstasy of fear and hope Ellen watched the pace of the old horse to see if it gave any sign of slackening near the gate. Her breath came short, she hardly breathed at all, she was trembling from head to foot. *Would* he stop, or was he going on! Oh the long agony of two minutes!—He stopped. Ellen went towards him.

"What little gal is this?" said he.

"I am Ellen Montgomery, sir," said Ellen eagerly;—"Miss Fortune's niece—I live here."

"Stop a bit," said the old man, taking up his saddlebags,—"Miss Fortune's niece, eh? Well—I believe—as I've got somethin' for her—somethin' here—aunt well, eh?"

"Yes sir."

"That's more than you be, aint it?" said he, glancing sideways at Ellen's face. How do you know but I've got a letter for you here, eh?"

The color rushed to that face, and she clasped her hands.

"No, dear, no," said he,—"I ha'n't got any for you—it's for the old lady—there, run in with it, dear."

But Ellen knew before she touched it that it was a foreign letter, and dashed into the house with it. Miss Fortune coolly sent her back to pay the postage.

"When she came in again her aunt was still reading the letter. But her look, Ellen *felt*, was unpromising. She did not venture to speak; expectation was chilled. She stood till Miss Fortune began to fold up the paper.

"Is there nothing for me?" she said then timidly.

"No."

"O why don't she write to me!" cried Ellen, bursting into tears.

Miss Fortune stalked about the room without any particular purpose, as far as could be seen.

"It is very strange!" said Ellen sorrowfully,—"I am afraid she is worse—does papa say she is worse?"

"No."

"O if she had only sent me a message! I should think she might; O I wish she had!—three words!—does papa say why she don't write?"

"No."

"It is very strange!" repeated poor Ellen.

"Your father talks of coming home," said Miss Fortune, after a few minutes, during which Ellen had been silently weeping.

"Home!—Then she must be better!" said Ellen with new life; "does papa say she is better?"

"No."

"But what does he mean?" said Ellen uneasily;—"I don't

see what he means; he doesn't say she is worse, and he doesn't say she is better,—what *does* he say?"

"He don't say much about anything."

"Does he say when they are coming home?"

Miss Fortune mumbled something about "Spring," and whisked off to the buttery; Ellen thought no more was to be got out of her. She felt miserable. Her father and her aunt both seemed to act strangely; and where to find comfort she scarcely knew. She had one day been telling her doubts and sorrows to John. He did not try to raise her hopes, but said, "Troubles will come in this world, Ellie; the best is to trust them and ourselves to our dear Saviour, and let trials drive us to him. Seek to love him more and to be patient under his will; the good Shepherd means nothing but kindness to any lamb in his flock,—you may be sure of that, Ellie."

Ellen remembered his words and tried to follow them now, but she could not be "patient under his will" yet,—not quite. It was very hard to be patient in such uncertainty. With swimming eyes she turned over her Bible in search of comfort, and found it. Her eye lit upon words she knew very well, but that were like the fresh sight of a friend's face for all that,—"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." There is no parting there, thought little Ellen. She cried a long time; but she was comforted nevertheless. The heart that rests on the blessed One who said those words can never be quite desolate.

For several days things went on in the old train, only her aunt, she thought, was sometimes rather queer,—not quite as usual in her manner towards her. Mr. Van Brunt was not *rather* but *very* queer; he scarce spoke or looked at Ellen; bolted down his food and was off without a word; and even stayed away entirely from two or three meals. She saw nobody else. Weather and other circumstances prevented her going to the mountain.

One afternoon she was giving her best attention to a French lesson, when she heard herself called. Miss Fortune was in the lower kitchen dipping candles. Ellen ran down.

"I don't know what's got into these candles," said Miss

Fortune,—"I can't make 'em hang together; the tallow aint good, I guess. Where's the nearest place they keep bees?"

"They have got bees at Mrs. Hitchcock's," said Ellen.

"So they have in Egypt, for anything I know," said her aunt;—"one would be about as much good now as t'other. Mrs. Lowndes!—that aint far off. Put on your bonnet, Ellen, and run over there, and ask her to let me have a little bees-wax. I'll pay her in something she likes best."

"Does Mrs. Lowndes keep bee-hives?" said Ellen doubtfully.

"No—she makes the bees-wax herself," said Miss Fortune, in the tone she always took when anybody presumed to suppose she might be mistaken in anything.

"How much shall I ask her for?" said Ellen.

"O I don't know—a pretty good piece."

Ellen was not very clear what quantity this might mean. However she wisely asked no more questions, and set out upon her walk. It was hot and disagreeable; just the time of day when the sun had most power, and Mrs. Lowndes' house was about half way on the road to Alice's. It was not a place where Ellen liked to go, though the people always made much of her; she did not fancy them, and regularly kept out of their way when she could. Miss Mary Lawson was sitting with Mrs. Lowndes and her daughter when Ellen came in and briefly gave her aunt's message.

"Bees-wax," said Mrs. Lowndes,—"well, I don't know—How much does she want?"

"I don't know, ma'am, exactly," she said;—"a pretty good piece."

"What's it for? do you know, honey?"

"I believe it's to put in some tallow for candles," said Ellen;—"the tallow was too soft she said."

"I didn't know Miss Fortune's tallow was ever anything but the hardest," said Sarah Lowndes.

"You had better not let your aunt know you've told on her, Ellen," remarked Mary Lawson; "she won't thank you."

"Had she a good lot of taller to make up?" inquired the mother, preparing to cut her bees-wax.

"I don't know ma'am; she had a big kettle, but I don't know how full it was."

"You may as well send a good piece, ma, while you are

about it," said the daughter;—"and ask her to let us have a piece of her sage cheese, will you?"

"Is it worth while to weigh it?" whispered Mrs. Lowndes.

Her daughter answered in the same tone, and Miss Mary joining them, a conversation of some length went on over the bees-wax which Ellen could not hear. The tones of the speakers became lower and lower; till at length her own name and an incautious sentence were spoken more distinctly and reached her.

"Shouldn't you think Miss Fortune might put a black riband at least on her bonnet?"

"Anybody but her would."

"Hush!——" They whispered again under breath.

The words entered Ellen's heart like cold iron. She did not move, hand or foot; she sat motionless with pain and fear, yet what she feared she dared not think. When the bees-wax was given her she rose up from her chair and stood gazing into Mrs. Lowndes' face as if she had lost her senses.

"My goodness, child, how you look!" said that lady. "What ails you, honey?"

"Ma'am," said Ellen,—"what was that you said, about —"

"About what, dear?" said Mrs. Lowndes, with a startled look at the others.

"About—a riband—" said Ellen, struggling to get the words out of her white lips.

"My goodness!" said the other;—"did you ever hear anything like that?—I didn't say nothing about a riband, dear."

"Do you suppose her aunt ha'n't told her?" said Miss Mary in an under tone.

"Told me what?" cried Ellen;—"Oh what?—what?"

"I wish I was a thousand miles off!" said Mrs. Lowndes; —"I don't know, dear—I don't know what it is—Miss Alice knows."

"Yes, ask Miss Alice," said Mary Lawson;—"she knows better than we do."

Ellen looked doubtfully from one to the other; then as "Go ask Miss Alice," was repeated on all sides, she caught up her bonnet and flinging the bees-wax from her hand darted out of the house. Those she had left looked at each other a minute in silence.

"Aint that too bad now!" exclaimed Mrs. Lowndes, crossing the room to shut the door. But what could I say?"

"Which way did she go?"

"I don't know I am sure—I had no head to look, or anything else. I wonder if I had ought to ha' told her.—But I couldn't ha' done it."

"Just look at her bees-wax!" said Sarah Lowndes.

"She will kill herself if she runs up the mountain at that rate," said Mary Lawson.

They all made a rush to the door to look after her.

"She aint in sight," said Mrs. Lowndes;—"if she's gone the way to the Nose she's got as far as them big poplars already, or she'd be somewhere this side of 'em where we could see her."

"You hadn't ought to ha' let her go, 'ma, in all this sun," said Miss Lowndes.

"I declare," said Mrs. Lowndes, "she scared me so I hadn't three idees left in my head. I wish I knew where she was, though, poor little soul!"

Ellen was far on her way to the mountain, pressed forward by a fear that knew no stay of heat or fatigue; they were little to her that day. She saw nothing on her way; all within and without was swallowed up in that one feeling; yet she dared not think what it was she feared. She put that by. Alice knew, Alice would tell her; on that goal her heart fixed, to that she pressed on; but oh, the while, what a cloud was gathering over her spirit, and growing darker and darker. Her hurry of mind and hurry of body made each other worse; it must be so; and when she at last ran round the corner of the house and burst in at the glass door she was in a frightful state.

Alice started up and faced her as she came in, but with a look that stopped Ellen short. She stood still; the color in her cheeks, as her eyes read Alice's, faded quite away; words and the power to speak them were gone together. Alas! the need to utter them was gone too. Alice burst into tears and held out her arms, saying only, "My poor child!" Ellen reached her arms, and strength and spirit seemed to fail there. Alice thought she had fainted; she laid her on the sofa, called Margery, and tried the usual things, weeping bitterly herself as she did so. It was not fainting however;

Ellen's senses soon came back; but she seemed like a person stunned with a great blow, and Alice wished grief had had any other effect upon her. It lasted for days. A kind of stupor hung over her; tears did not come; the violent strain of every nerve and feeling seemed to have left her benumbed. She would sleep long heavy sleeps the greater part of the time, and seemed to have no power to do anything else.

Her adopted sister watched her constantly, and for those days lived but to watch her. She had heard all Ellen's story from Mary Lawson and Mr. Van Brunt; who had both been to the parsonage, one on Mrs. Lowndes' part, the other on his own, to ask about her; and she dreaded that a violent fit of illness might be brought on by all Ellen had undergone. She was mistaken, however. Ellen was not ill; but her whole mind and body bowed under the weight of the blow that had come upon her. As the first stupor wore off there were indeed more lively signs of grief; she would weep till she wept her eyes out, and that often, but it was very quietly; no passionate sobbing, no noisy crying; sorrow had taken too strong hold to be struggled with, and Ellen meekly bowed her head to it. Alice saw this with the greatest alarm. She had refused to let her go back to her aunt's; it was impossible to do otherwise; yet it may be that Ellen would have been better there. The busy industry to which she would have been forced at home might have roused her; as it was, nothing drew her, and nothing could be found to draw her, from her own thoughts. Her interest in everything seemed to be gone. Books had lost their charm. Walks and drives and staying at home were all one, except indeed that she rather liked best the latter. Appetite failed; her cheek grew colorless; and Alice began to fear that if a stop were not soon put to this gradual sinking it would at last end with her life. But all her efforts were without fruit; and the winter was a sorrowful one not to Ellen alone.

As it wore on, there came to be one thing in which Ellen again took pleasure, and that was her Bible. She used to get alone or into a corner with it, and turn the leaves over and over; looking out its gentle promises and sweet comforting words to the weak and the sorrowing. She loved to read about Christ,—all he said and did; all his kindness to his people and tender care of them; the love shown them here

and the joys prepared for them hereafter. She began to cling more to that one unchangeable friend from whose love neither life nor death can sever those that believe in him; and her heart, tossed and shaken as it had been, began to take rest again in that happy resting-place with stronger affection and even with greater joy than ever before. Yet for all that, this joy often kept company with bitter weeping; the stirring of anything like pleasure roused sorrow up afresh; and though Ellen's look of sadness grew less dark, Alice could not see that her face was at all less white and thin. She never spoke of her mother, after once hearing when and where she had died; she never hinted at her loss, except exclaiming in an agony, "I shall get no more letters!" and Alice dared not touch upon what the child seemed to avoid so carefully; though Ellen sometimes wept on her bosom, and often sat for hours still and silent with her head in her lap.

The time drew nigh when John was expected home for the holidays. In the mean while they had had many visits from other friends. Mr. Van Brunt had come several times, enough to set the whole neighborhood a wondering if they had only known it; his good old mother oftener still. Mrs. Vawse as often as possible. Miss Fortune once; and that because, as she said to herself, "everybody would be talking about what was none of their business if she didn't.' As neither she nor Ellen knew in the least what to say to each other, the visit was rather a dull one, spite of all Alice could do. Jenny Hitchcock and the Huffs and the Dennisons, and others, came now and then; but Ellen did not like to see any of them all but Mrs. Vawse. Alice longed for her brother.

He came at last, just before New Year's. It was the middle of a fine afternoon, and Alice and her father had gone in the sleigh to Carra-carra. Ellen had chosen to stay behind, but Margery did not know this, and of course did not tell John. After paying a visit to her in the kitchen he had come back to the empty sitting-room, and was thoughtfully walking up and down the floor, when the door of Alice's room slowly opened and Ellen appeared. It was never her way, when she could help it, to show violent feeling before other people; so she had been trying to steel herself to meet John without crying, and now came in with her little grave

face prepared not to give way. His first look had like to overset it all.

"Ellie!" said he;—"I thought everybody was gone. My dear Ellie!—"

Ellen could hardly stand the tone of these three words, and she bore with the greatest difficulty the kiss that followed them; it took but a word or two more, and a glance at the old look and smile, to break down entirely all her guard. According to her usual fashion she was rushing away; but John held her fast, and though gently drew her close to him.

"I will not let you forget that I am your brother, Ellie," said he.

Ellen hid her face on his shoulder and cried as if she had never cried before.

"Ellie," said he after a while, speaking low and tenderly, "the Bible says, 'We have known and believed the love that God hath toward us;'—have you remembered and believed this lately?"

Ellen did not answer.

"Have you remembered that God loves every sinner that has believed in his dear Son?—and loves them so well that he will let nothing come near them to harm them?—and loves them never better than when he sends bitter trouble on them? It is wonderful! but it is true. Have you thought of this, Ellie?"

She shook her head.

"It is not in anger he does it;—it is not that he has forgotten you;—it is not that he is careless of your trembling little heart,—never, never! If you are his child, all is done in love and shall work good for you; and if we often cannot see how, it is because we are weak and foolish, and can see but a very little way."

Ellen listened, with her face hid on his shoulder.

"Do you love Christ, Ellen?"

She nodded, weeping afresh.

"Do you love him less since he has brought you into this great sorrow?"

"No," sobbed Ellen;—"*more.*"

He drew her closer to his breast, and was silent a little while.

"I am very glad to hear you say that!—then all will be well. And haven't you the best reason to think that all *is* well with your dear mother?"

Ellen almost shrieked. Her mother's name had not been spoken before her in a great while, and she could hardly bear to hear it now. Her whole frame quivered with hysterical sobs.

"Hush, Ellie!" said John, in a tone that, low as it was, somehow found its way through all her agitation, and calmed her like a spell;—"have you not good reason to believe that all is well with her?"

"O yes!—oh yes!"

"She loved and trusted him too; and now she is with him—she has reached that bright home where there is no more sin, nor sorrow, nor death."

"Nor parting either," sobbed Ellen, whose agitation was excessive.

"Nor parting!—and though *we* are parted from them, it is but for a little; let us watch and keep our garments clean, and soon we shall be all together, and have done with tears for ever. *She* has done with them now.—Did you hear from her again?"

"Oh no!—not a word!"

"That is a hard trial.—But in it all, believe, dear Ellie, the love that God hath toward us;—remember that our dear Saviour is near us, and feels for us, and is the same at all times.—And don't cry so, Ellie."

He kissed her once or twice, and begged her to calm herself. For it seemed as if Ellen's very heart was flowing away in her tears; yet they were gentler and softer far than at the beginning. The conversation had been a great relief. The silence between her and Alice on the thing always in her mind, a silence neither of them dared to break, had grown painful. The spell was taken off; and though at first Ellen's tears knew no measure, she was easier even then; as John soothed her and went on with his kind talk, gradually leading it away from their first subject to other things, she grew not only calm but more peaceful at heart than months had seen her. She was quite herself again before Alice came home.

"You have done her good already," exclaimed Alice, as

soon as Ellen was out of the room;—"I knew you would; I saw it in her face as soon as I came in."

"It is time," said her brother. "She is a dear little thing!"

The next day, in the middle of the morning, Ellen, to her great surprise, saw Sharp brought before the door with the side-saddle on, and Mr. John carefully looking to the girth and shortening the stirrup.

"Why Alice," she exclaimed,—"what is Mr. John going to do?"

"I don't know, Ellie, I am sure; he does queer things sometimes. What makes you ask?"

Before she could answer he opened the door.

"Come Ellen—go and get ready. Bundle up well, for it is rather frosty. Alice, has she a pair of gloves that are warm enough? Lend her yours, and I'll see if I can find some at Thirlwall."

Ellen thought she would rather not go; to anybody else she would have said so. Half a minute she stood still—then went to put on her things.

"Alice, you will be ready by the time we get back?—in half an hour."

Ellen had an excellent lesson, and her master took care it should not be an easy one. She came back looking as she had not done all winter. Alice was not quite ready; while waiting for her John went to the bookcase and took down the first volume of "Rollin's Ancient History;" and giving it to Ellen, said he would talk with her to-morrow about the first twenty pages. The consequence was, the hour and a half of their absence instead of being moped away was spent in hard study. A pair of gloves was bought at Thirlwall; Jenny Hitchcock's pony was sent for; and after that, every day when the weather would at all do they took a long ride. By degrees reading and drawing and all her studies were added to the history, till Ellen's time was well filled with business again. Alice had endeavored to bring this about before, but fruitlessly. What she asked of her Ellen indeed *tried* to do; what John told her *was done*. She grew a different creature. Appetite came back; the color sprang again to her cheek; hope,—meek and sober as it was,—relighted her eye. In her eagerness to please and satisfy

her teacher her whole soul was given to the performance of whatever he wished her to do. The effect was all that he looked for.

The second evening after he came John called Ellen to his side, saying he had something he wanted to read to her. It was before candles were brought, but the room was full of light from the blazing wood fire. Ellen glanced at his book as she came to the sofa; it was a largish volume in a black leather cover a good deal worn; it did not look at all interesting.

"What is it?" she asked.

"It is called," said John, "'The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to a better.'"

Ellen thought it did not *sound* at all interesting. She had never been more mistaken in her life, and that she found almost as soon as he begun. Her attention was nailed; the listless careless mood in which she sat down was changed for one of rapt delight; she devoured every word that fell from the reader's lips; indeed they were given their fullest effect by a very fine voice and singularly fine reading. Whenever anything might not be quite clear to Ellen, John stopped to make it so; and with his help, and without it, many a lesson went home. Next day she looked a long time for the book; it could not be found; she was forced to wait until evening. Then to her great joy, it was brought out again, and John asked if she wished to hear some more of it. After that, every evening while he was at home they spent an hour with the "Pilgrim." Alice would leave her work and come to the sofa too; and with her head on her brother's shoulder, her hand in his, and Ellen's face leaning against his other arm, that was the common way they placed themselves to read and hear. No words can tell Ellen's enjoyment of those readings. They made her sometimes laugh and sometimes cry; they had much to do in carrying on the cure which John's wisdom and kindness had begun.

They came to the place where Christian loses his burden at the cross; and as he stood looking and weeping, three shining ones came to him. The first said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee; the second stripped him of his rags and clothed him with a change of raiment; the third also set a mark on his forehead."

John explained what was meant by the rags and the change of raiment.

"And the mark in his forehead?" said Ellen.

"That is the mark of God's children—the change wrought in them by the Holy Spirit,—the change that makes them different from others, and different from their old selves."

"Do all Christians have it?"

"Certainly. None can be a Christian without it."

"But how can one tell whether one has it or no?" said Ellen very gravely.

"Carry your heart and life to the Bible and see how they agree. The Bible gives a great many signs and descriptions by which Christians may know themselves,—know both what they are and what they ought to be. If you find your own feelings and manner of life at one with these Bible words, you may hope that the Holy Spirit has changed you and set his mark upon you."

"I wish you would tell me of one of those places," said Ellen.

"The Bible is full of them. 'To them that believe *Christ is precious*,'—there is one. 'If ye love me, *keep my commandments*;'—'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also *so to walk even as he walked*;'—'O how *love I thy law*.' The Bible is full of them, Ellie; but you have need to ask for great help when you go to try yourself by them; the heart is deceitful."

Ellen looked sober all the rest of the evening, and the next day she pondered the matter a good deal.

"I think I am changed," she said to herself at last. "I didn't use to like to read the Bible, and now I do very much;—I never liked praying in old times, and now, O what should I do without it!—I didn't love Jesus at all, but I am sure I do now. I don't keep his commandments, but I do *try* to keep them;—I *must* be changed a little. O I wish mamma had known it before ——."

Weeping with mixed sorrow and thankful joy, Ellen bent her head upon her little Bible to pray that she might be *more* changed; and then, as she often did, raised the cover to look at the texts in the beloved handwriting.

"I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me."

Ellen's tears were blinding her. "That has come true," she thought.

"I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee."

"That has come true too!" she said, almost in surprise,—"and mamma believed it would."—And then, as by a flash, came back to her mind the time it was written; she remembered how when it was done her mother's head had sunk upon the open page; she seemed to see again the thin fingers tightly clasped;—she had not understood it then; she did now! "She was praying for me," thought Ellen,—"she was praying for me! she believed that would come true."

The book was dashed down, and Ellen fell upon her knees in a perfect agony of weeping.

Even this, when she was calm again, served to steady her mind. There seemed to be a link of communion between her mother and her that was wanting before. The promise, written and believed in by the one, realized and rejoiced in by the other, was a dear something in common, though one had in the meanwhile removed to heaven, and the other was still a lingerer on the earth. Ellen bound the words upon her heart.

Another time, when they came to the last scene of Christian's journey, Ellen's tears ran very fast. John asked if he should pass it over? if it distressed her? She said, Oh no, it did not distress her; she wanted him to go on;—and he went on, though himself much distressed, and Alice was near as bad as Ellen. But the next evening, to his surprise, Ellen begged that before he went on to the second part he would read that piece over again. And when he lent her the book, with only the charge that she should not go further than he had been, she pored over that scene with untiring pleasure till she almost had it by heart. In short, never was a child more comforted and contented with a book than Ellen was with the "Pilgrim's Progress." That was a blessed visit of John's. Alice said he had come like a sunbeam into the house; she dreaded to think what would be when he went away.

She wrote him, however, when he had been gone a few weeks, that his will seemed to carry all before it, present or

absent. Ellen went on steadily mending; at least she did not go back any. They were keeping up their rides, also their studies, most diligently; Ellen was untiring in her efforts to do whatever he had wished her, and was springing forward, Alice said, in her improvement.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I keep his house, and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat, and make the beds, and do all myself.—SHAKESPEARE.

THE spring had come; and Alice and Ellen were looking forward to pleasanter rides and walks after the sun should have got a little warmth and the snow should be gone; when one morning in the early part of March Mr. Van Brunt made his appearance. Miss Fortune was not well, and had sent him to beg that Ellen would come back to her. He was sorry, he said;—he knew Ellen was in the best place; but her aunt wanted her, and "he s'posed she'd have to go." He did not know what was the matter with Miss Fortune; it was a little of one thing and a little of another; he s'posed she'd overdid, and it was a wonder for he didn't know she *could* do it. *She* thought she was as tough as a piece of shoe-leather, but even that could be wore out.

Ellen looked blank. However she hurriedly set herself to get her things together, and with Alice's help in half an hour she was ready to go. The parting was hard. They held each other fast a good while, and kissed each other many times without speaking.

"Good-bye, dear Ellie," whispered Alice at last,—"I'll come and see you soon. Remember what John said when he went away."

Ellen did not trust herself to speak. She pulled herself away from Alice, and turned to Mr. Van Brunt, saying by her manner that she was ready; he took her bundle and they went out of the house together.

Ellen made a manful effort all the way down the hill to stifle the tears that were choking her. She knew they would greatly disturb her companion, and she did succeed though with great difficulty in keeping them back. Luckily for her, he said hardly anything during the whole walk; she could not have borne to answer a question. It was no fault

of Mr. Van Brunt's that he was so silent; he was beating his brains the whole way to think of something it would do to say, and could not suit himself. His single remark was, "that it was like to be a fine spring for the maple, and he guessed they'd make a heap of sugar."

When they reached the door he told her she would find her aunt up stairs, and himself turned off to the barn. Ellen stopped a minute upon the threshhold to remember the last time she had crossed it,—and the *first* time; how changed everything now!—and the thought came, was *this* now to be her home for ever? She had need again to remember John's words. When bidding her good-bye he had said, "My little pilgrim, I hope you will keep the straight road, and win the praise of the servant who was faithful over a few things." "I will try!" thought poor Ellen; and then she passed through the kitchen and went up to her own room. Here, without stopping to think, she took off her things, gave one strange look at the old familiar place and her trunk in the corner, fell on her knees for one minute, and then went to her aunt's room.

"Come in!" cried Miss Fortune when Ellen had knocked. "Well Ellen, there you are. I am thankful it is you; I was afraid it might be Mimy Lawson or Sarah Lowndes, or some of the rest of the set; I know they'll all come scampering here as soon as they hear I'm laid up."

"Are you very sick, aunt Fortune?" said Ellen.

"La! no, child; I shall be up again to-morrow; but I felt queer this morning somehow, and I thought I'd try lying down. I expect I've caught some cold."

There was no doubt of this, but this was not all. Besides catching cold, and doing her best to bring it about, Miss Fortune had overtasked her strength; and by dint of economy, housewifery, and *smartness*, had brought on herself the severe punishment of lying idle and helpless for a much longer time than she at first reckoned on.

"What can I do for you, aunt Fortune?" said Ellen.

"O nothing, as I know," said Miss Fortune,—"only let me alone and don't ask me anything, and keep people out of the house. Mercy! my head feels as if it would go crazy! Ellen, look here," said she, raising herself on her elbow,—"I won't have anybody come into this house,—if I lie here till

doomsday, I won't! Now you mind me. I aint a going to have Mimy Lawson, nor nobody else, poking all round into every hole and corner, and turning every cheese upside down to see what's under it. There aint one of 'em too good for it, and they sha'n't have a chance. They'll be streaking here, a dozen of 'em, to help take care of the house; but I don't care what becomes of the house—I won't have anybody in it. Promise me you won't let Mr. Van Brunt bring any one here to help; I know I can trust you to do what I tell you; promise me!"

Ellen promised, a good deal gratified at her aunt's last words; and once more asked if she could do anything for her.

"O I don't know!" said Miss Fortune, flinging herself back on her pillow;—"I don't care what you do, if you only keep the house clear. There's the clothes in the basket under the table down stairs—you might begin to iron 'em; they're only rough dry. But don't come asking me about anything; I can't bear it.—Ellen, don't let a soul go into the buttery except yourself.—And Ellen! I don't care if you make me a little catnip tea;—the catnip's up in the store-room,—the furthest door in the back attic—here's the keys. Don't go to fussing with anything else there."

Ellen thought the prospect before her rather doleful when she reached the kitchen. It was in order, to be sure, and clean; but it looked as if the mistress was away. The fire had gone out, the room was cold; even so little a matter as catnip tea seemed a thing far off and hard to come by. While she stood looking at the great logs in the fireplace, which she could hardly move, and thinking it was rather a dismal state of things, in came Mr. Van Brunt with his good-natured face, and wanted to know if he could do anything for her. The very room seemed more comfortable as soon as his big figure was in it. He set about kindling the fire forthwith, while Ellen went up to the storeroom. A well-filled store-room! Among other things, there hung at least a dozen bunches of dried herbs from one of the rafters. Ellen thought she knew catnip, but after smelling of two or three she became utterly puzzled and was fain to carry a leaf of several kinds down to Mr. Van Brunt to find out which was which. When she came down again she found he had hung on the

kettle for her, and swept up the hearth; so Ellen, wisely thinking it best to keep busy, put the ironing blanket on the table, and folded the clothes, and set the irons to the fire. By this time the kettle boiled. How to make catnip tea Ellen did not exactly know, but supposed it must follow the same rules as black tea, in the making of which she felt herself very much at home. So she put a pinch or two of catnip leaves into the pot, poured a little water on them, and left it to draw. Meanwhile came in kind Mr. Van Brunt with an armfull or two of small short sticks for the fire, which Ellen could manage.

"I wish I could stay here and take care of you all the while," said he; "but I'll be round. If you want anything you must come to the door and holler."

Ellen began to thank him.

"Just don't say anything about that," said he, moving his hands as if he were shaking her thanks out of them; "I'd back all the wood you could burn every day for the pleasure of having you hum again, if I didn't know you was better where you was; but I can't help that. Now, who am I going to get to stay with you? Who would you like to have."

"Nobody, if you please, Mr. Van Brunt," said Ellen; "aunt Fortune don't wish it, and I had rather not, indeed."

He stood up and looked at her in amazement.

"Why you don't mean to say," said he, "that you are thinking, or she is thinking, you can get along here alone without help?"

"I'll get along somehow," said Ellen. "Never mind, please let me, Mr. Van Brunt; it would worry aunt Fortune very much to have anybody; don't say anything about it."

"Worry her!" said he; and he muttered something Ellen did not quite understand, about "bringing the old woman to reason."

However he went off for the present; and Ellen filled up her teapot and carried it up stairs. Her old grandmother was awake; before, when Ellen was in the room, she had been napping; now she showed the greatest delight at seeing her; fondled her, kissed her, cried over her, and finally insisted on getting up directly and going down stairs. Ellen received and returned her caresses with great tenderness, and then began to help her to rise and dress.

"Yes, do," said Miss Fortune; "I shall have a little better chance of sleeping. My stars! Ellen, what do you call this?"

"Isn't it catnip?" said Ellen, alarmed.

"Catnip! it tastes of nothing but the teakettle. It's as weak as dish water. Take it down and make some more. How much did you put in? you want a good double handful, stalks and all; make it strong. I can't drink such stuff as that. I think if I could get into a sweat I should be better."

Ellen went down, established her grandmother in her old corner, and made some more tea. Then, her irons being hot, she began to iron; doing double duty at the same time, for Mrs. Montgomery had one of her talking fits on, and it was necessary to hear and answer a great many things. Presently the first visiter appeared in the shape of Nancy.

"Well, Ellen!" said she; "so Miss Fortune is really sick for once, and you are keeping house. Aint you grand!"

"I don't feel very grand," said Ellen. "I don't know what is the matter with these clothes; I *cannot* make 'em look smooth."

"Irons aint hot," said Nancy.

"Yes they are, too hot. I've scorched a towel already."

"My goodness, Ellen! I guess you have. If Miss Fortune was down you'd get it. Why they're bone dry!" said Nancy, plunging her hand into the basket;—"you haven't sprinkled 'em, have you?"

"To be sure," said Ellen, with an awakened face, "I forgot it!"

"Here, get out of the way, *I'll* do it for you," said Nancy, rolling up her sleeves and pushing Ellen from the table; "you just get me a bowl of water, will you, and we'll have 'em done in no time. Who's a-coming to help you?"

"Nobody."

"Nobody!—you poor chicken; do you think you're agoing to do all the work of the house yourself?"

"No," said Ellen, "but I can do a good deal, and the rest will have to go."

"You aint going to do no such a thing; I'll stay myself."

"No you can't, Nancy," said Ellen, quietly.

"I guess I will if I've a mind to. I should like to know how you'd help it; Miss Fortune's abed."

"I could help it though," said Ellen; "but I am sure you won't when I ask you not."

"I'll do anything you please," said Nancy, "if you'll get Miss Fortune to let me stay. Come do, Ellen! It will be splendid; and I'll help you finely, and I won't bother you neither. Come! go ask her; if you don't I will."

"I can't, Nancy; she don't want anybody; and it worries her to talk to her. I can't go and ask her."

Nancy impatiently flung down the cloth she was sprinkling and ran up stairs. In a few minutes she came down with a triumphant face and bade Ellen go up to her aunt.

"Ellen," said Miss Fortune, "if I let Nancy stay will you take care of the keys, and keep her out of the buttery?"

"I'll try to, ma'am, as well as I can.

"I'd as lief have her as anybody," said Miss Fortune, "if she'd behave;—she was with me a little in the winter; she is smart and knows the ways;—if I was sure she would behave herself, but I am afraid she will go rampanging about the house like a wild cat."

"I think I could prevent that," said Ellen, who to say truth was willing to have anybody come to share what she felt would be a very great burden. "She knows I could tell Mr. Van Brunt if she didn't do right, and she would be afraid of that."

"Well," said Miss Fortune, disconsolately, "let her stay then. Oh dear, to lie here! but tell her if she don't do just what you tell her, I'll have Mr. Van Brunt turn her out by the ears. And don't let her come near me, for she drives me mad. And, Ellen! put the keys in your pocket. Have you got a pocket in that dress.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Put 'em in there and dont take 'em out. Now go."

Nancy agreed to the conditions with great glee; and the little housekeeper felt her mind a good deal easier; for though Nancy herself was somewhat of a charge, she was strong and willing and ready, and if she liked anybody liked Ellen. Mr. Van Brunt privately asked Ellen if she chose to have Nancy stay; and told her, if she gave her any trouble, to let him know and he would make short work with her. The young lady herself also had a hint on the subject.

"I'll tell you what," said Nancy, when this business was settled,—"we'll let the men go off to Miss Van Brunt's to meals; we'll have enough to do without 'em. That's how Miss Fortune has fixed herself,—she would have Sam and Johnny in to board; they never used to, you know, afore this winter.

"The men may go," said Ellen, "but I had a great deal rather Mr. Van Brunt would stay than not,—if we can only manage to cook things for him; we should have to do it at any rate for ourselves, and for grandma."

"Well—*I* aint as fond of him as all that," said Nancy,—"but it'll have to be as you like I suppose. We'll feed him somehow."

Mr. Van Brunt came in to ask if they had anything in the house for supper. Ellen told him "plenty," and would have him come in just as usual. There was nothing to do but to make tea; cold meat and bread and butter and cheese were all in the buttery; so that evening went off very quietly.

When she came down the next morning the fire was burning nicely, and the kettle on and singing. Not Nancy's work; Mr. Van Brunt had slept in the kitchen, whether on the table, the floor, or the chairs, was best known to himself; and before going to his work had left everything he could think of ready done to her hand; wood for the fire, pails of water brought from the spout, and some matters in the lower kitchen got out of the way. Ellen stood warming herself at the blaze, when it suddenly darted into her head that it was milking time. In another minute she had thrown open the door and was running across the chip-yard to the barn. There, in the old place, were all her old friends, both four-legged and two-legged; and with great delight she found Dolly had a fine calf and Streaky another superb one, brindled just like herself. Ellen longed to get near enough to touch their little innocent heads, but it was impossible; and recollecting the business on her hands she too danced away.

"Whew!" said Nancy, when Ellen told her of the new inmates of the barnyard;—"there'll be work to do! Get your milk-pans ready, Ellen;—in a couple of weeks we'll be making butter."

"Aunt Fortune will be well by that time, I hope," said Ellen.

"She won't then, so you may just make up your mind to it. Dr. Gibson was to see her yesterday forenoon, and he stopped at Miss Lowndes on his way back; and he said it was a chance if she got up again in a month and more. So that's what it is, you see."

"A month and more." It was all that. Miss Fortune was not dangerously ill; but part of the time in a low nervous fever, part of the time encumbered with other ailments, she lay from week to week; bearing her confinement as ill as possible, and making it as disagreeable and burdensome as possible for Ellen to attend upon her. Those were weeks of trial. Ellen's patience and principle and temper were all put to the proof. She had no love, in the first place, for household work, and now her whole time was filled up with it. Studies could not be thought of. Reading was only to be had by mere snatches. Walks and rides were at an end. Often when already very tired she had to run up and down stairs for her aunt, or stand and bathe her face and hands with vinegar, or read the paper to her when Miss Fortune declared she was so nervous she should fly out of her skin if she didn't hear something besides the wind. And very often when she was not wanted up stairs, her old grandmother would beg her to come and read to *her*,—perhaps at the very moment when Ellen was busiest. Ellen did her best. Miss Fortune never could be put off; her old mother sometimes could, with a kiss and a promise; but not always; and then, rather than she should fret, Ellen would leave everything and give half an hour to soothing and satisfying her. She loved to do this at other times; now it was sometimes burdensome. Nancy could not help her at all in these matters, for neither Miss Fortune nor the old lady would let her come near them. Besides all this there was a measure of care constantly upon Ellen's mind; she felt charged with the welfare of all about the house; and under the effort to meet the charge, joined to the unceasing bodily exertion, she grew thin and pale. She was tired with Nancy's talk; she longed to be reading and studying again; she longed, oh how she longed! for Alice's and John's company again; and it was no wonder if she sometimes cast very sad longing looks further back still. Now and then an old fit of weeping would come. But Ellen remembered John's words; and often in the midst of her work,

stopping short with a sort of pang of sorrow and weariness, and the difficulty of doing right, she would press her hands together and say to herself, "I will try to be a good pilgrim!" Her morning hour of prayer was very precious now; and her Bible grew more and more dear. Little Ellen found its words a mighty refreshment; and often when reading it she loved to recall what Alice had said at this and the other place, and John, and Mr. Marshman, and before them her mother. The passages about heaven, which she well remembered reading to her one particular morning, became great favorites; they were joined with her mother in Ellen's thoughts; and she used to go over and over them till she nearly knew them by heart.

"What *do* you keep reading that for, the whole time?" said Nancy one day.

"Because I like to," said Ellen.

"Well if you do, you're the first one ever I saw that did."

"O Nancy!" said Ellen;—"your grandma?"

"Well she does I believe," said Nancy,—"for she's always at it; but all the rest of the folks that ever I saw are happy to get it out of their hands, *I* know. They think they must read a little and so they do, and they are too glad if something happens to break 'em off. You needn't tell *me;* I've seen 'em."

"I wish *you* loved it, Nancy," said Ellen.

"Well what do you love it for? come, let's hear; maybe you'll convert me."

"I love it for a great many reasons," said Ellen, who had some difficulty in speaking of what she felt Nancy could not understand.

"Well—I aint any wiser yet."

"I like to read it because I want to go to heaven, and it tells me how."

"But what's the use?" said Nancy;—"you aint going to die yet; you are too young; you've time enough."

"O Nancy!—little John Dolan, and Eleanor Parsons, and Mary Huff,—all younger than you and I; how can you say so?"

"Well," said Nancy,—"at any rate, that aint reading it because you love it;—it's because you must, like other folks."

"That's only one of my reasons," said Ellen hesitating, and speaking gravely;—"I like to read about the Saviour, and what he has done for me, and what a friend he will be to me, and how he forgives me. I had rather have the Bible, Nancy, than all the other books in the world."

"That aint saying much," said Nancy;—"but how come you to be so sure you are forgiven?"

"Because the Bible says, 'He that believeth on him shall not be ashamed,' and I believe in him;—and that he will not cast out any one that comes to him, and I have come to him;—and that he loves those that loves him, and I love him. If it did not speak so very plainly I should be afraid, but it makes me happy to read such verses as these. I wish you knew, Nancy, how happy it makes me."

This profession of faith was not spoken without starting tears. Nancy made no reply.

As Miss Fortune had foretold, plenty of people came to the house with proffers of service. Nancy's being there made it easy for Ellen to get rid of them all. Many were the marvels that Miss Fortune should trust her house to "two girls like that," and many the guesses that she would rue it when she got up again. People were wrong. Things went on very steadily and in an orderly manner; and Nancy kept the peace as she would have done in few houses. Bold and insolent as she sometimes was to others, she regarded Ellen with a mixed notion of respect and protection, which led her at once to shun doing anything that would grieve her, and to thrust her aside from every heavy or difficult job, taking the brunt herself. Nancy might well do this, for she was at least twice as strong as Ellen; but she would not have done it for everybody.

There were visits of kindness as well as visits of officiousness. Alice and Mrs. Van Brunt, and Margery, one or the other every day. Margery would come in and mix up a batch of bread; Alice would bring a bowl of butter, or a basket of cake; and Mrs. Van Brunt sent whole dinners. Mr. Van Brunt was there always at night, and about the place as much as possible during the day; when obliged to be absent, he stationed Sam Larkens to guard the house, also to bring wood and water and do whatever he was bid. All the help however that was given from abroad could not make Ellen's

life an easy one; Mr. Van Brunt's wishes that Miss Fortune would get up again began to come very often. The history of one day may serve for the history of all those weeks.

It was in the beginning of April. Ellen came down stairs early, but come when she would she found the fire made and the kettle on. Ellen felt a little as if she had not quite slept off the remembrance of yesterday's fatigue; however, that was no matter; she set to work. She swept up the kitchen, got her milk strainer and pans ready upon the buttery shelf, and began to set the table. By the time this was half done, in came Sam Larkens with two great pails of milk, and Johnny Low followed with another. They were much too heavy for Ellen to lift, but true to her charge she let no one come into the buttery but herself; she brought the pans to the door, where Sam filled them for her, and as each was done she set it in its place on the shelf. This took some time for there were eight of them. She had scarce wiped up the spilt milk and finished setting the table when Mr. Van Brunt came in.

"Good morning!" said he. How d'ye do to-day?"

"Very well, Mr. Van Brunt."

"I wish you'd look a little redder in the face. Don't you be too busy? Where's Nancy?"

"O she's busy, out with the clothes."

"Same as ever up stairs?—What are you going to do for breakfast, Ellen?"

"I don't know, Mr. Van Brunt; there isn't anything cooked in the house; we have eaten everything up."

"Cleaned out, eh? Bread and all?"

"O no, not bread; there's plenty of that, but there's nothing else."

"Well never mind;—you bring me a ham and a dozen of eggs, and I'll make you a first-rate breakfast."

Ellen laughed, for this was not the first time Mr. Van Brunt had acted as cook for the family. While she got what he had asked for, and bared a place on the table for his operations, he went to the spout and washed his hands.

"Now a sharp knife, Ellen, and the frying pan, and a dish,—and that's all I want of you."

Ellen brought them, and while he was busy with the ham she made the coffee and set it by the side of the fire to boil; got the cream and butter, and set the bread on the table; and

then set herself down to rest, and amuse herself with Mr. Van Brunt's cookery. He was no mean hand; his slices of ham were very artist-like, and frying away in the most unexceptionable manner. Ellen watched him and laughed at him, till the ham was taken out and all the eggs broke in; then after seeing that the coffee was right she went upstairs to dress her grandmother—always the last thing before breakfast.

"Who's frying ham and eggs down stairs?" inquired Miss Fortune.

"Mr. Van Brunt," said Ellen.

This answer was unexpected. Miss Fortune tossed her head over in a dissatisfied kind of way, and told Ellen to "tell him to be careful."

"Of what?" thought Ellen; and wisely concluded with herself not to deliver the message; very certain she should laugh if she did, and she had running in her head an indistinct notion of the command, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Breakfast was ready but no one there when she got down stairs. She placed her grandmother at table, and called Nancy, who all this time had been getting the clothes out of the rinsing water and hanging them out on the line to dry; said clothes having been washed the day before by Miss Sarah Lowndes, who came there for the purpose. Ellen poured out the coffee, and then in came Mr. Van Brunt with a head of early lettuce which he had pulled in the garden and washed at the spout. Ellen had to jump up again to get the salt and pepper and vinegar; but she always jumped willingly for Mr. Van Brunt. The meals were pleasanter during those weeks than in all the time Ellen had been in Thirlwall before; or she thought so. That sharp eye at the head of the table was pleasantly missed. They with one accord sat longer at meals; more talking and laughing went on; nobody felt afraid of being snapped up. Mr. Van Brunt praised Ellen's coffee, (he had taught her how to make it,) and she praised his ham and eggs. Old Mrs. Montgomery praised everything, and seemed to be in particular comfort; talked as much as she had a mind, and was respectfully attended to. Nancy was in high feather; and the clatter of knives and forks and tea cups went on very pleasantly. But at last chairs were pushed from the table, and work began again.

Nancy went back to her tubs. Ellen supplied her grandmother with her knitting and filled her snuff-box; cleared the table and put up the dishes ready for washing. Then she went into the buttery to skim the cream. This was a part of the work she liked. It was heavy lifting the pans of milk to the skimming shelf before the window, but as Ellen drew her spoon round the edge of the cream she liked to see it wrinkle up in thick yellow leathery folds, showing how deep and rich it was; it looked half butter already. She knew how to take it off now very nicely. The cream was set by in a vessel for future churning, and the milk, as each pan was skimmed, was poured down the wooden trough at the left of the window through which it went into a great hogshead at the lower kitchen door.

This done Ellen went up stairs to her aunt. Dr. Gibson always came early, and she and her room must be put in apple-pie order first. It was a long wearisome job. Ellen brought the basin for her to wash her face and hands; then combed her hair and put on her clean cap. That was always the first thing. The next was to make the bed; and for this, Miss Fortune, weak or strong, wrapped herself up and tumbled out upon the floor. When she was comfortably placed again, Ellen had to go through a laborious dusting of the room and all the things in it, even taking a dustpan and brush to the floor if any speck of dust or crumbs could be seen there. Every rung of every chair must be gone over, though never so clean; every article put up or put out of the way; Miss Fortune made the most of the little province of housekeeping that was left her; and a fluttering tape escaping through the crack of the door would have put her whole spirit topsy-turvy. When all was to her mind, and not before, she would have her breakfast. Only gruel and biscuit, or toast and tea, or some such trifle, but Ellen must prepare it, and bring it up stairs, and wait till it was eaten. And very particularly it must be prepared, and very faultlessly it must be served, or with an impatient expression of disgust Miss Fortune would send it down again. On the whole Ellen always thought herself happy when this part of her day was well over.

When she got down this morning she found the kitchen in nice order, and Nancy standing by the fire in a little sort of pause, having just done the breakfast dishes.

"Well!" said Nancy,—"what are you going to do now?"

"Put away these dishes, and then churn," said Ellen.

"My goodness! so you are. What's going to be for dinner, Ellen?"

"That's more than I know," said Ellen laughing. "We have eaten up Mrs. Van Brunt's pie and washed the dish;—there's nothing but some cold potatoes."

"*That* won't do," said Nancy. "I tell you what, Ellen,—we'll just boil pot for to-day; somebody else will send us something by to-morrow most likely."

"I don't know what you mean by 'boil pot,'" said Ellen.

"O you don't know everything yet, by half. *I* know—I'll fix it. You just give me the things, Miss Housekeeper, that's all you've got to do; I want a piece of pork and a piece of beef, and all the vegetables you've got."

"All?" said Ellen.

"Every soul on 'em. Don't be scared, Ellen; you shall see what I can do in the way of cookery; if you don't like it you needn't eat it. What have you got in the cellar?"

"Come and see, and take what you want, Nancy; there is plenty of potatoes and carrots and onions, and beets I believe; the turnips are all gone."

"Parsnips out in the yard, aint there?"

"Yes, but you'll have to do with a piece of pork, Nancy; I don't know anything about beef."

While Nancy went round the cellar gathering in her apron the various roots she wanted, Ellen uncovered the pork barrel, and after looking a minute at the dark pickle she never loved to plunge into, bravely bared her arm and fished up a piece of pork.

"Now, Nancy, just help me with this churn out of the cellar, will you? and then you may go."

"My goodness! it is heavy," said Nancy. "You'll have a time of it, Ellen; but I can't help you."

She went off to the garden for parsnips, and Ellen quietly put in the dasher and the cover, and began to churn. It was tiresome work. The churn was pretty full, as Nancy had said; the cream was rich and cold, and at the end of half an hour grew very stiff. It spattered and sputtered up on Ellen's face and hands and frock and apron, and over the floor; legs and arms were both weary; but still that pitiless dasher must go

up and down, hard as it might be to force it either way; she must not stop. In this state of matters she heard a pair of thick shoes come clumping down the stairs, and beheld Mr. Van Brunt.

"Here you are!" said he. "Churning!—Been long at it?"

"A good while," said Ellen, with a sigh.

"Coming?"

"I don't know when."

Mr. Van Brunt stepped to the door and shouted for Sam Larkens. He was ordered to take the churn and bring the butter; and Ellen, very glad of a rest, went out to amuse herself with feeding the chickens, and then up stairs to see what Nancy was doing.

"Butter come?" said Nancy.

"No, Sam has taken it. How are you getting on? O, I am tired!"

"I'm getting on first-rate; I've got all the things in."

"In what!"

"Why in the pot!—in a pot of water, boiling away as fast as they can; we'll have dinner directly. Hurra! who comes there?"

She jumped to the door. It was Thomas, bringing Margery's respects, and a custard pie, for Miss Ellen.

"I declare," said Nancy, "it is a good thing to have friends, aint it? I'll try and get some.—Hollo! what's wanting?—Mr. Van Brunt's calling you, Ellen."

Ellen ran down.

"The butter's come," said he. "Now do you know what to do with it?"

"O yes," said Ellen smiling; "Margery showed me nicely."

He brought her a pail of water from the spout, and stood by with a pleased kind of look, while she carefully lifted the cover and rinsed down the little bits of butter which stuck to it and the dasher; took out the butter with her ladle into a large wooden bowl, washed it, and finally salted it.

"Don't take too much pains," said he;—"the less of the hand it gets the better. That will do very well."

"Now are you ready?" said Nancy, coming down stairs, "'cause dinner is. My goodness! aint that a fine lot of butter? there's four pounds, aint there?"

"Five," said Mr. Van Brunt.

"And as sweet as it can be," said Ellen. "Beautiful, isn't it? Yes, I'm ready, as soon as I set this in the cellar and cover it up."

Nancy's dish,—the pork, potatoes, carrots, beets, and cabbage, all boiled in the same pot together,—was found very much to everybody's taste except Ellen's. She made her dinner off potatoes and bread, the former of which she declared, laughing, were very porky and cabbagy; her meal would have been an extremely light one if it had not been for the custard pie.

After dinner new labors began. Nancy had forgotten to hang on a pot of water for the dishes; so after putting away the eatables in the buttery, while the water was heating, Ellen warmed some gruel and carried it with a plate of biscuit up stairs to her aunt. But Miss Fortune said she was tired of gruel and couldn't eat it; she must have some milk porridge; and she gave Ellen very particular directions how to make it. Ellen sighed only once as she went down with her despised dish of gruel, and set about doing her best to fulfill her aunt's wishes. The first dish of milk she burnt;—another sigh and another trial;—better care this time had better success, and Ellen had the satisfaction to see her aunt perfectly suited with her dinner.

When she came down with the empty bowl Nancy had a pile of dishes ready washed, and Ellen took the towel to dry them. Mrs. Montgomery, who had been in an uncommonly quiet fit all day, now laid down her knitting and asked if Ellen would not come and read to her.

"Presently, grandma,—as soon as I have done here.

"I know somebody that's tired," said Nancy. "I tell you what Ellen,—you hadbetter take to liking pork; you can't work on potatoes. I aint tired a bit. There's somebody coming to the door again! Do run and open it, will you? my hands are wet. I wonder why folks can't come in without giving so much trouble."

It was Thomas again, with a package for Ellen which had just come, he said, and Miss Alice thought she would like to have it directly. Ellen thanked her, and thanked him, with a face from which all signs of weariness had fled away. The

parcel was sealed up, and directed in a hand she was pretty sure she knew. Her fingers burned to break the seals; but she would not open it there, neither leave her work unfinished; she went on wiping the dishes with trembling hands and a beating heart.

"What's that?" said Nancy; "what did Thomas Grimes want? what have you got there?"

"I don't know," said Ellen smiling;—"something good, I guess."

"Something good? is it something to eat?"

"No," said Ellen,—"I didn't mean anything to eat when I said something good; I don't think those are the best things."

To Ellen's delight, she saw that her grandmother had forgotten about the reading and was quietly taking short naps with her head against the chimney. So she put away the last dish, and then seized her package and flew up stairs. She was sure it had come from Doncaster; she was right. It was a beautiful copy of the Pilgrim's Progess,—on the first leaf written, "To my little sister Ellen Montgomery, from J. H.;" and within the cover lay a letter. This letter Ellen read in the course of the next six days at least twice as many times; and never without crying over it.

"Alice has told me" (said John,) "about your new troubles. There is said to be a time 'when the clouds return after the rain.' I am sorry, my little sister, this time should come to you so early. I often think of you, and wish I could be near you. Still, dear Ellie, the good Husbandman knows what his plants want; do you believe that, and can you trust him? They should have nothing but sunshine if that was good for them. He knows it is not; so there come clouds and rains, and 'stormy wind fulfilling his will.' And what is it all for?—'Herein is my Father glorified, *that ye bear much fruit;*' do not disappoint his purpose, Ellie. We shall have sunshine enough by-and-by,—but I know it is hard for so young a one as my little sister to look much forward; so do not look forward, Ellie; look up! look off unto Jesus,—from all your duties, troubles, and wants; he will help you in them all. The more you look up to him the more he will look down to you; and he especially said,

'Suffer *little children* to come unto me;' you see you are particularly invited."

Ellen was a long time up stairs, and when she came down it was with red eyes.

Mrs. Montgomery was now awake and asked for the reading again; and for three quarters of an hour Ellen and she were quietly busy with the Bible. Nancy meanwhile was down stairs washing the dairy things. When her grandmother released her Ellen had to go up to wait upon her aunt; after which she went into the buttery, and skimmed the cream, and got the pans ready for the evening milk. By this time it was five o'clock, and Nancy came in with the basket of dry clothes; at which Ellen looked with the sorrowful consciousness that they must be sprinkled and folded by-and-by, and ironed to-morrow. It happened however that Jane Huff came in just then with a quantity of hot short-cake for tea; and seeing the basket she very kindly took the business of sprinkling and folding upon herself. This gave Ellen spirits to carry out a plan she had long had, to delight the whole family with some eggs scrambled in Margery's fashion; after the milk was strained and put away she went about it, while Nancy set the table. A nice bed of coals was prepared; the spider set over them; the eggs broken in, peppered and salted; and she began carefully to stir them as she had seen Margery do. But instead of acting right the eggs maliciously stuck fast to the spider and burned. Ellen was confounded.

"How much butter did you put in?" said Mr. Van Brunt, who had come in, and stood looking on.

"Butter!" said Ellen looking up,—"O I forgot all about it!—I ought to have put that in, oughtn't I?—I'm sorry!"

"Never mind," said Mr. Van Brunt,—'t aint worth your being sorry about. Here Nancy—clean us off this spider, and we'll try again."

At this moment Miss Fortune was heard screaming; Ellen ran up.

"What did she want?" said Mr. Van Brunt when she came down again.

"She wanted to know what was burning."

"Did you tell her?"

"Yes."

"Well what did she say?"

"Said I mustn't use any more eggs without asking her."

"That aint fair play," said Mr. Van Brunt;—"you and I are the head of the house now, I take it. You just use as many on 'em as you've a mind; and all you spile I'll fetch you again from hum. That's you, Nancy! Now Ellen, here's the spider; try again; let's have plenty of butter in this time, and plenty of eggs too."

This time the eggs were scrambled to a nicety, and the supper met with great favor from all parties.

Ellen's day was done when the dishes were. The whole family went early to bed. She was weary;—but she could rest well. She had made her old grandmother comfortable; she had kept the peace with Nancy; she had pleased Mr. Van Brunt; she had faithfully served her aunt. Her sleep was uncrossed by a dream, untroubled by a single jar of conscience. And her awaking to another day of labor, though by no means joyful, was yet not unhopeful or unhappy.

She had a hard trial a day or two after. It was in the end of the afternoon, she had her big apron on, and was in the buttery skimming the milk, when she heard the kitchen door open, and footsteps enter the kitchen. Out went little Ellen to see who it was, and there stood Alice and old Mr. Marshman! He was going to take Alice home with him the next morning, and wanted Ellen to go too; and they had come to ask her. Ellen knew it was impossible, that is, that it would not be right, and she said so; and in spite of Alice's wistful look, and Mr. Marshman's insisting, she stood her ground. Not without some difficulty, and some glistening of the eyes. They had to give it up. Mr. Marshman then wanted to know what she meant by swallowing herself up in an apron in that sort of a way? so Ellen had him into the buttery and showed him what she had been about. He would see her skim several pans, and laughed at her prodigiously; though there was a queer look about his eyes, too, all the time. And when he went away, he held her in his arms, and kissed her again and again; and said that "some of these days he would take her away from her aunt, and she should have her no more." Ellen stood and looked after

them till they were out of sight, and then went up stairs and had a good cry.

The butter-making soon became quite too much for Ellen to manage; so Jane Huff and Jenny Hitchcock were engaged to come by turns and do the heavy part of it; all within the buttery being still left to Ellen, for Miss Fortune would have no one else go there. It was a great help to have them take even so much off her hands; and they often did some other little odd jobs for her. The milk however seemed to increase as fast as the days grew longer, and Ellen could not find that she was much less busy. The days were growing pleasant too; soft airs began to come; the grass was of a beautiful green; the buds on the branches began to swell, and on some trees to put out. When Ellen had a moment of time she used to run across the chip-yard to the barn, or round the garden, or down to the brook, and drink in the sweet air and the lovely sights which never had seemed quite so lovely before. If once in a while she could get half an hour before tea, she used to take her book and sit down on the threshold of the front door, or on the big log under the apple-tree in the chip-yard. In those minutes the reading was doubly sweet; or else the loveliness of earth and sky was such that Ellen could not take her eyes from them; till she saw Sam or Johnny coming out of the cow-house door with the pails of milk, or heard their heavy tramp over the chips;—then she had to jump and run. Those were sweet half hours. Ellen did not at first know how much reason she had to be delighted with her "Pilgrim's Progress;" she saw to be sure that it was a fine copy, well bound, with beautiful cuts. But when she came to look further, she found all through the book, on the margin or at the bottom of the leaves, in John's beautiful hand-writing, a great many notes; simple, short, plain, exactly what was needed to open the whole book to her and make it of the greatest possible use and pleasure. Many things she remembered hearing from his lips when they were reading it together; there was a large part of the book where all was new; the part he had not had time to finish. How Ellen loved the book and the giver when she found these beautiful notes, it is impossible to tell. She counted it her greatest treasure next to her little red Bible.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

'O what will I do wi' him, quo' he,
What will I do wi' him?
What will I do wi' him, quo' he,
What will I do wi' him?"

OLD SONG.

IN the course of time Miss Fortune showed signs of mending; and, at last, towards the latter end of April, she was able to come down stairs. All parties hailed this event for different reasons; even Nancy was grown tired of her regular life, and willing to have a change. Ellen's joy was, however, soon diminished by the terrible rummaging which took place. Miss Fortune's hands were yet obliged to lie still, but her eyes did double duty; *they* were never known to be idle in the best of times, and it seemed to Ellen now as if they were taking amends for all their weeks of forced rest. Oh, those eyes! Dust was found where Ellen never dreamed of looking for any; things were said to be dreadfully "in the way" where she had never found it out; disorder and dirt were groaned over, where Ellen did not know the fact or was utterly ignorant how to help it; waste was suspected where none had been, and carelessness charged where rather praise was due. Impatient to have things to her mind, and as yet unable to do anything herself, Miss Fortune kept Nancy and Ellen running, till both wished her back in bed; and even Mr. Van Brunt grumbled that "to pay Ellen for having grown white and poor, her aunt was going to work the little flesh she had left off her bones." It was rather hard to bear, just when she was looking for ease too; her patience and temper were more tried than in all those weeks before. But if there was small pleasure in pleasing her aunt, Ellen did earnestly wish to please God; she struggled against ill temper, prayed against it; and though she often blamed herself in secret, she

did so go through that week as to call forth Mr. Van Brunt's admiration, and even to stir a little the conscience of her aunt. Mr. Van Brunt comforted her with the remark that "it is darkest just before day," and so it proved. Before the week was at an end Miss Fortune began, as she expressed it, to "take hold;" Jenny Hitchcock and Jane Huff were excused from any more butter-making; Nancy was sent away; Ellen's labors were much lightened; and the house was itself again.

The third of May came. For the first time in near two months Ellen found in the afternoon she could be spared awhile; there was no need to think twice what she would do with her leisure. Perhaps Margery could tell her something of Alice! Hastily and joyfully she exchanged her working frock for a merino, put on nice shoes and stockings and ruffle again, and taking her bonnet and gloves to put on out of doors, away she ran. Who can tell how pleasant it seemed, after so many weeks, to be able to walk abroad again, and to walk to the mountain! Ellen snuffed the sweet air, skipped on the greensward, picked nosegays of grass and dandelions, and at last unable to contain herself set off to run. Fatigue soon brought this to a stop; then she walked more leisurely on, enjoying. It was a lovely spring day. Ellen's eyes were gladdened by it; she felt thankful in her heart that God had made everything so beautiful; she thought it was pleasant to think *he* had made them; pleasant to see in them everywhere so much of the wisdom and power and goodness of him she looked to up with joy as her best friend. She felt quietly happy, and sure he would take care of her. Then a thought of Alice came into her head; she set off to run again, and kept it up this time till she got to the old house and ran round the corner. She stopped at the shed door and went through into the lower kitchen.

"Why Miss Ellen dear!" exclaimed Margery,—"if that isn't you! Aren't you come in the *very* nick of time! How *do* you do? I am *very* glad so see you—uncommon glad to be sure. What witch told you to come here just now? Run in, run into the parlor and see what you'll find there."

"Has Alice come back?" cried Ellen. But Margery only laughed and said, "Run in!"

Up the steps, through the kitchen, and across the hall, Ellen ran,—burst open the parlor door,—and was in Alice's

arms. There were others in the room; but Ellen did not seem to know it, clinging to her and holding her in a fast glad embrace, till Alice bade her look up and attend to somebody else. And then she was seized round the neck by little Ellen Chauncey!—and then came her mother, and then Miss Sophia. The two children were overjoyed to see each other, while their joy was touching to see, from the shade of sorrow in the one, and of sympathy in the other. Ellen was scarcely less glad to see kind Mrs. Chauncey; Miss Sophia's greeting too was very affectionate. But Ellen returned to Alice, and rested herself in her lap with one arm round her neck, the other hand being in little Ellen's grasp.

"And now you are happy, I suppose?" said Miss Sophia when they were thus placed.

"Very," said Ellen, smiling.

"Ah, but you'll be happier by-and-by," said Ellen Chauncey.

"Hush Ellen!" said Miss Sophia;—"what curious things children are!—You didn't expect to find us all here, did you, Ellen Montgomery?"

"No indeed ma'am," said Ellen, drawing Alice's cheek nearer for another kiss.

"We have but just come Ellie," said her sister. "I should not have been long in finding you out. My child, how thin you have got."

"O I'll grow fat again now," said Ellen.

"How is Miss Fortune?"

"O she is up again and well."

"Have you any reason to expect your father home, Ellen?" said Mrs. Chauncey.

"Yes, ma'am;—aunt Fortune says perhaps he will be here in a week."

"Then you are very happy in looking forward, aren't you?" said Miss Sophia, not noticing the cloud that had come over Ellen's brow.

Ellen hesitated,—colored,—colored more,—and finally with a sudden motion hid her face against Alice.

"When did he sail, Ellie?" said Alice gravely.

"In the Duc d'Orleans—he said he would—

"*When?*"

"The fifth of April.—O I can't help it!" exclaimed Ellen, failing in the effort to control herself; she clasped Alice as if she feared even then the separating hand. Alice bent her head down and whispered words of comfort.

"Mamma!" said little Ellen Chauncey under her breath, and looking solemn to the last degree,—"don't Ellen want to see her father?"

"She's afraid that he may take her away where she will not be with Alice any more; and you know she has no mother to go to."

"Oh!" said Ellen with a very enlightened face;—"but he won't, will he?"

"I hope not; I think not."

Cheered again, the little girl drew near and silently took one of Ellen's hands.

"We shall not be parted, Ellie," said Alice,—"you need not fear. If your father takes you away from your aunt Fortune, I think it will be only to give you to me. You need not fear yet."

"Mamma says so too, Ellen," said her little friend.

This was strong consolation. Ellen looked up and smiled.

"Now come with me," said Ellen Chauncey, pulling her hand,—"I want you to show me something; let's go down to the garden,—come! exercise is good for you."

"No, no," said her mother smiling,—"Ellen has had exercise enough lately; you mustn't take her down to the garden now; you would find nothing there. Come here!"

A long whisper followed, which seemed to satisfy little Ellen and she ran out of the room. Some time passed in pleasant talk and telling all that had happened since they had seen each other; then little Ellen came back and called Ellen Montgomery to the glass door, saying she wanted her to look at something.

"It is only a horse we brought with us," said Miss Sophia. "Ellen thinks it is a great beauty, and can't rest till you have seen it."

Ellen went accordingly to the door. There to be sure was Thomas before it holding a pony bridled and saddled. He was certainly a very pretty little creature; brown all over except one white forefoot; his coat shone it was so glossy;

his limbs were fine; his eye gentle and bright; his tail long enough to please the children. He stood as quiet as a lamb, whether Thomas held him or not.

"O what a beauty!" said Ellen;—"what a lovely little horse!"

"Aint he!" said Ellen Chauncey;—"and he goes so beautifully besides, and never starts nor nothing; and he is as good-natured as a little dog.

"As a *good-natured* little dog, she means, Ellen," said Miss Sophia,—"there are little dogs of very various characters."

"Well he looks good-natured," said Ellen. What a pretty head!—and what a beautiful new side-saddle, and all. I never saw such a dear little horse in my life. Is it yours, Alice?"

"No," said Alice, "it is a present to a friend of Mr. Marshman's."

"She'll be a very happy friend, I should think," said Ellen.

"That's what I said," said Ellen Chauncey, dancing up and down,—"that's what I said. I said you'd be happier by-and-by, didn't I?"

"I?" said Ellen coloring.

"Yes, you,—you are the friend it is for; it's for you, it's for you! you are grandpa's friend, aren't you?" she repeated, springing upon Ellen, and hugging her up in an ecstasy of delight.

"But it isn't really for me, is it?" said Ellen, now looking almost pale;—"Oh Alice!—"

"Come, come," said Miss Sophia,—"what will papa say if I tell him you received his present so?—come, hold up your head! Put on your bonnet and try him;—come Ellen! let's see you."

Ellen did not know whether to cry or laugh,—till she mounted the pretty pony; that settled the matter. Not Ellen Chauncey's unspeakable delight was as great as her own. She rode slowly up and down before the house, and once a-going would not have known how to stop if she had not recollected that the pony had traveled thirty miles that day and must be tired. Ellen took not another turn after that. She jumped down, and begged Thomas to take the tenderest care of him; patted his neck; ran into the kitchen to beg of Margery a piece of bread to give him from her

hand; examined the new stirrup and housings, and the pony all over a dozen times; and after watching him as Thomas led him off, till he was out of sight, finally came back into the house with a face of marvelous contentment. She tried to fashion some message of thanks for the kind giver of the pony; but she wanted to express so much that no words would do. Mrs. Chauncey however smiled and assured her she knew exactly what to say.

"That pony has been destined for you, Ellen," she said, "this year and more; but my father waited to have him thoroughly well broken. You need not be afraid of him; he is perfectly gentle and well-trained; if he had not been sure of that my father would never have sent him;—though Mr. John *is* making such a horsewoman of you."

"I wish I could thank him," said Ellen;—"but I don't know how."

"What will you call him, Ellen?" said Miss Sophia. "My father has dubbed him 'George Marshman;'—"he says you will like that, as my brother is such a favorite of yours."

"He didn't *really*, did he?" said Ellen, looking from Sophia to Alice. "I needn't call him that, need I?"

"Not unless you like," said Miss Sophia laughing,—"you may change it; but what *will* you call him?"

"I don't know," said Ellen very gravely,—"he must have a name to be sure."

"But why don't you call him that?" said Ellen Chauncey; —"George is a very pretty name;—I like that; I should call him 'Uncle George.'"

"O I couldn't!" said Ellen,—"I couldn't call him so; I shouldn't like it at all."

"George Washington?" said Mrs. Chauncey.

"No indeed!" said Ellen. "I guess I wouldn't!"

"Why is it too good, or not good enough?" said Miss Sophia.

"Too good! A great deal too good for a horse! I wouldn't for anything."

"How would Brandywine do then, since you are so patriotic?" said Miss Sophia, looking amused.

"What is 'patriotic?'" said Ellen.

"A patriot, Ellen," said Alice smiling,—"is one who has a strong and true love for his country."

"I don't know whether I am patriotic," said Ellen, "but I won't call him Brandywine. Why Miss Sophia!"

"No, I wouldn't either," said Ellen Chauncey;—"it isn't a pretty name. Call him Seraphine!—like Miss Angell's pony—that's pretty."

"No no,—'Seraphine!' nonsense!" said Miss Sophia;—"call him Benedict Arnold, Ellen; and then it will be a relief to your mind to whip him."

"Whip him!" said Ellen,—"I don't want to whip him, I am sure; and I should be afraid to besides."

"Hasn't John taught you that lesson yet?" said the young lady;—"he is perfect in it himself. Do you remember, Alice, the chastising he gave that fine black horse of ours we called the 'Black Prince?'—a beautiful creature he was,—more than a year ago?—My conscience! he frightened me to death."

"I remember," said Alice; "I remember I could not look on."

"What did he do that for?" said Ellen.

"What's the matter Ellen Montgomery?" said Miss Sophia, laughing,—"where did you get that long face? Are you thinking of John or the horse?"

Ellen's eye turned to Alice.

"My dear Ellen," said Alice smiling, though she spoke seriously,—it was necessary; it sometimes is necessary to do such things. You do not suppose John would do it cruelly or unnecessarily?"

Ellen's face shortened considerably.

"But what had the horse been doing?"

"He had not been doing anything; he would *not* do,—that was the trouble; he was as obstinate as a mule."

"My dear Ellen," said Alice, "it was no such terrible matter as Sophia's words have made you believe. It was a clear case of obstinacy. The horse was resolved to have his own way and not do what his rider required of him; it was necessary that either the horse or the man should give up; and as John has no fancy for giving up, he carried his point,—partly by management, partly, I confess, by a judicious use of the whip and spur; but there was no such furious flagellation as Sophia seems to mean, and which a good horseman would scarce be guilty of."

"A very determined 'use,'" said Miss Sophia. "I advise you, Ellen, not to trust your pony with Mr. John; he will have no mercy on him."

"Sophia is laughing, Ellen," said Alice. "You and I know John, do we not?"

"Then he did right?" said Ellen.

"Perfectly right—except in mounting the horse at all, which I never wished him to do. No one on the place would ride him."

"He carried John beautifully all the day after that though," said Miss Sophia, "and I dare say he might have ridden him to the end of the chapter if you would have let papa give him to him. But he was of no use to anybody else. Howard couldn't manage him—I suppose he was too lazy. Papa was delighted enough that day to have given John anything. And I can tell you Black Prince the second is spirited enough; I am afraid you wont like him."

"John has a present of a horse too, Ellen," said Alice.

"Has he?—from Mr. Marshman?"

"Yes."

"I'm very glad! O what rides we can take now, can't we, Alice? We shan't want to borrow Jenny's pony any more. What kind of a horse is Mr. John's?"

"Black,—perfectly black."

"Is he handsome?"

"Very."

"Is his name Black Prince?"

"Yes."

Ellen began to consider the possibility of calling her pony the Brown Princess, or by some similar title—the name of John's two chargers seeming the very most striking a horse could be known by.

"Don't forget, Alice," said Mrs. Chauncey, "to tell John to stop for him on his way home. It will give us a chance of seeing him, which is not a common pleasure, in any sense of the term."

They went back to the subject of the name, which Ellen pondered with uneasy visions of John and her poor pony flitting through her head. The little horse was very hard to fit, or else Ellen's taste was very hard to suit; a great many names were proposed, none of which were to her mind.

Charley, and Cherry, and Brown, and Dash, and Jumper,—but she said they had "John" and "Jenny" already in Thirlwall, and she didn't want a "Charley;" "Brown" was not pretty, and she hoped he wouldn't "dash" at anything, nor be a "jumper" when she was on his back. Cherry she mused awhile about, but it wouldn't do.

"Call him Fairy," said Ellen Chauncey;—"that's a pretty name. Mamma says she used to have a horse called Fairy. Do, Ellen! call him Fairy."

"No," said Ellen; "he can't have a lady's name—that's the trouble."

"I have it, Ellen!" said Alice;—"I have a name for you,—call him the Brownie."

"The 'Brownie?'" said Ellen.

"Yes—brownies are male fairies; and brown is his color; so how will that do?"

It was soon decided that it would do very well. It was simple, descriptive, and not common; Ellen made up her mind that 'The Brownie' should be his name. No sooner given, it began to grow dear. Ellen's face quitted its look of anxious gravity and came out into the broadest and fullest satisfaction. She never showed joy boisterously; but there was a light in her eye which brought many a smile into those of her friends as they sat round the tea-table.

After tea it was necessary to go home, much to the sorrow of all parties. Ellen knew however it would not do to stay; Miss Fortune was but just got well, and perhaps already thinking herself ill-used. She put on her things.

"Are you going to take your pony home with you?" said Miss Sophia.

"O no ma'am, not to-night. I must see about a place for him; and besides, poor fellow, he is tired I dare say."

"I do believe you would take more care of his legs than of your own," said Miss Sophia.

"But you'll be here to-morrow early, Ellie?"

"O won't I!" exclaimed Ellen, as she sprang to Alice's neck;—"as early as I can, at least; I don't know when aunt Fortune will have done with me."

The way home seemed as nothing. If she was tired she did not know it. The Brownie! the Brownie!—the thought of him carried her as cleverly over the ground as his very

back would have done. She came running into the chip-yard.

"Hollo!" cried Mr. Van Brunt, who was standing under the apple tree cutting a piece of wood for the tongue of the ox-cart, which had been broken,—I'm glad to see you *can* run. I was afeard you'd hardly be able to stand by this time; but there you come like a young deer!"

"O Mr. Van Brunt," said Ellen, coming close up to him and speaking in an under tone,—"you don't know what a present I have had! What do you think Mr. Marshman has sent me from Ventnor?"

"Couldn't guess," said Mr. Van Brunt, resting the end of his pole on the log and chipping at it with his hatchet;—"never guessed anything in my life;—what is it?"

"He has sent me the most beautiful little horse you ever saw!—for my own—for me to ride; and a new beautiful saddle and bridle; you never saw anything so beautiful, Mr. Van Brunt; he is all brown, with one white fore-foot, and I've named him the 'Brownie;' and O Mr. Van Brunt! do you think aunt Fortune will let him come here?"

Mr. Van Brunt chipped away at his pole, looking very good-humored.

"Because you know I couldn't have half the good of him if he had to stay away from me up on the mountain. I shall want to ride him every day. Do you think aunt Fortune will let him be kept here, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"I guess she will," said Mr. Van Brunt soberly, and his tone said to Ellen, "*I* will, if she don't."

"Then will you ask her and see about it?—if you please Mr. Van Brunt! I'd rather you would. And you won't have him put to plough or anything, will you Mr. Van Brunt? Miss Sophia says it would spoil him."

"I'll plough myself first," said Mr. Van Brunt with his half smile;—"there sha'n't be a hair of his coat turned the wrong way. *I'll* see to him—as if he was a prince."

"O thank you, dear Mr. Van Brunt! How good you are. Then I shall not speak about him at all till you do, remember. I am *very* much obliged to you, Mr. Van Brunt!"

Ellen ran in. She got a chiding for her long stay, but it fell upon ears that could not hear. The Brownie came like a shield between her and all trouble. She smiled at her

aunt's hard words as if they had been sugar-plums. And her sleep that night might have been prairie land, for the multitude of horses of all sorts that chased through it.

"Have you heerd the news?" said Mr. Van Brunt, when he had got his second cup of coffee at breakfast next morning.

"No," said Miss Fortune. "What news?"

"There aint as much news as there used to be when I was young," said the old lady;—"'seems to me I don't hear nothing now-a-days."

"You might, if you'd keep your ears open, mother. *What* news, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"Why here's Ellen's got a splendid little horse sent her a present from some of her great friends,—Mr. Marshchalk,—"

"Mr. Marshman," said Ellen.

"Mr. Marshman. There aint the like in the country, as I've heerd tell; and I expect next thing she'll be flying over all the fields and fences like smoke."

There was a meaning silence. Ellen's heart beat.

"What's going to be done with him, do you suppose?" said Miss Fortune. Her look said, "If you think I am coming round you are mistaken."

"Humph!" said Mr. Van Brunt slowly,—"I s'pose he'll eat grass in the meadow,—and there'll be a place fixed for him in the stables."

"Not in *my* stables," said the lady shortly.

"No,—in mine," said Mr. Van Brunt half smiling;—"and I'll settle with you about it by and by,—when we square our accounts."

Miss Fortune was very much vexed; Ellen could see that; but she said no more, good or bad, about the matter; so the Brownie was allowed to take quiet possession of meadow and stables; to his mistress's unbounded joy.

Anybody that knew Mr. Van Brunt would have been surprised to hear what he said that morning; for he was thought to be quite as keen a looker after the main chance as Miss Fortune herself, only somehow it was never laid against him as it was against her. However that might be, it was plain he took pleasure in keeping his word about the pony. Ellen herself could not have asked more careful kindness for her favorite than the Brownie had from every man and boy about the farm.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Thou must run to him; for thou hast stayed so long that going will scarce serve the turn."—SHAKSPEARE.

CAPTAIN Montgomery did *not* come the next week, nor the week after; and what is more, the Duck Dorleens, as his sister called the ship in which he had taken passage, was never heard of from that time. She sailed duly on the fifth of April, as they learnt from the papers; but whatever became of her she never reached port. It remained a doubt whether Captain Montgomery had actually gone in her; and Ellen had many weeks of anxious watching, first for himself, and then for news of him in case he were still in France. None ever came. Anxiety gradually faded into certainty; and by midsummer no doubt of the truth remained in any mind. If Captain Montgomery had been alive, he would certainly have written, if not before, on learning the fate of the vessel in which he had told his friends to expect him home.

Ellen rather felt that she was an orphan than that she had lost her father. She had never learned to love him, he had never given her much cause. Comparatively a small portion of her life had been passed in his society, and she looked back to it as the least agreeable of all; and it had not been possible for her to expect with pleasure his return to America and visit to Thirlwall; she dreaded it. Life had nothing now worse for her than a separation from Alice and John Humphreys; she feared her father might take her away and put her in some dreadful boarding-school, or carry her about the world whereever he went, a wretched wanderer from everything good and pleasant. The knowledge of his death had less pain for her than the removal of this fear brought relief.

Ellen felt sometimes, soberly and sadly, that she was thrown upon the wide world now. To all intents and purposes so she had been a year and three quarters before; but it was

something to have a father and mother living even on the other side of the world. Now, Miss Fortune was her sole guardian and owner. However she could hardly realize that, with Alice and John so near at hand. Without reasoning much about it, she felt tolerably secure that they would take care of her interests, and make good their claim to interfere if ever need were.

Ellen and her little horse grew more and more fond of each other. This friendship, no doubt, was a comfort to the Brownie; but to his mistress it made a large part of the pleasure of her every day life. To visit him was her delight, at all hours, early and late; and it is to the Brownie's credit that he always seemed as glad to see her as she was to see him. At any time Ellen's voice would bring him from the far end of the meadow where he was allowed to run. He would come trotting up at her call, and stand to have her scratch his forehead or pat him and talk to him; and though the Brownie could not answer her speeches he certainly seemed to hear them with pleasure. Then throwing up his head he would bound off, take a turn in the field, and come back again to stand as still as a lamb so long as she stayed there herself. Now and then, when she had a little more time, she would cross the fence and take a walk with him; and there, with his nose just at her elbow, wherever she went the Brownie went after her. After a while there was no need that she should call him; if he saw or heard her at a distance it was enough; he would come running up directly. Ellen loved him dearly.

She gave him more proof of it than words and caresses. Many were the apples and scraps of bread hoarded up for him; and if these failed, Ellen sometimes took him a little salt to show that he was not forgotten. There were not certainly many scraps left at Miss Fortune's table; nor apples to be had at home for such a purpose, except what she gathered up from the poor ones that were left under the trees for the hogs; but Ellen had other sources of supply. Once she had begged from Jenny Hitchcock a waste bit that she was going to throw away; Jenny found what she wanted to do with it, and after that many a basket of apples and many a piece of cold shortcake was set by for her. Margery too remembered the Brownie when disposing of her odds and ends; likewise did Mrs. Van Brunt; so that among them all Ellen seldom want-

ed something to give him. Mr. Marshman did not know what happiness he was bestowing when he sent her that little horse. Many, many, were the hours of enjoyment she had upon his back. Ellen went nowhere but upon the Brownie. Alice made her a riding-dress of dark gingham; and it was the admiration of the country to see her trotting or cantering by, all alone, and always looking happy. Ellen soon found that if the Brownie was to do her much good she must learn to saddle and bridle him herself. This was very awkward at first, but there was no help for it. Mr. Van Brunt showed her how to manage, and after a while it became quite easy. She used to call the Brownie to the bar-place, put the bridle on, and let him out; and then he would stand motionless before her while she fastened the saddle on; looking round sometimes as if to make sure that it was she herself, and giving a little kind of satisfied neigh when he saw that it was. Ellen's heart began to dance as soon as she felt him moving under her; and once off and away on the docile and spirited little animal, over the roads, through the lanes, up and down the hills, her horse her only companion, but having the most perfect understanding with him, both Ellen and the Brownie cast care to the winds. "I do believe," said Mr. Van Brunt, "that critter would a *leetle* rather have Ellen on his back than not." He was the Brownie's next best friend. Miss Fortune never said anything to him or of him.

Ellen however reaped a reward for her faithful steadiness to duty while her aunt was ill. Things were never after that as they had been before. She was looked on with a different eye. To be sure Miss Fortune tasked her as much as ever, spoke as sharply, was as ready to scold if anything went wrong;—all that was just as it used to be; but beneath all that Ellen felt with great satisfaction that she was trusted and believed. She was no longer an interloper, in everybody's way; she was not watched and suspected; her aunt treated her as one of the family and a person to be depended on. It was a very great comfort to little Ellen's life. Miss Fortune even owned that "she believed she was an honest child and meant to do right,"—a great deal from her; Miss Fortune was never over forward to give any one the praise of *honesty*. Ellen now went out and came in without feeling she was an alien. And though her aunt was always bent on keeping

herself and everybody else at work, she did not now show any particular desire for breaking off Ellen from her studies; and was generally willing when the work was pretty well done up that she should saddle the Brownie and be off to Alice or Mrs. Vawse.

Though Ellen was happy, it was a sober kind of happiness; —the sun shining behind a cloud. And if others thought her so, it was not because she laughed loudly or wore a merry face.

"I can't help but think," said Mrs. Van Brunt, "that that child has something more to make her happy than what she gets in this world."

There was a quilting party gathered that afternoon at Mrs. Van Brunt's house.

"There is no doubt of that, neighbor," said Mrs. Vawse; "nobody ever found enough here to make him happy yet."

"Well I don't want to see a prettier girl than that," said Mrs. Lowndes;—"you'll never catch her, working at home or riding along on that handsome little critter of her'n, that she ha'n't a pleasant look and a smile for you, and as pretty behaved as can be. I never see her look sorrowful but once."

"Aint that a pretty horse?" said Mimy Lawson.

"*I've* see her look sorrowful though," said Sarah Lowndes; "I've been up at the house when Miss Fortune was hustling everybody round, and as sharp as vinegar, and you'd think it would take Job's patience to stand it;—and for all there wouldn't be a bit of crossness in that child's face,—she'd go round, and not say a word that wasn't just so;—you'd ha' thought her bread was all spread with honey; and everybody knows it aint. I don't see how she could do it, for my part. I know *I* couldn't."

"Ah, neighbor," said Mrs. Vawse, "Ellen looks higher than to please her aunt; she tries to please her God; and one can bear people's words or looks when one is pleasing him.—She is a dear child!

"And there's 'Brahm," said Mrs. Van Brunt,—"he thinks the hull world of her. I never see him take so to any one. There aint an airthly thing he wouldn't do to please her. If she was his own child I've no idee he could set her up more than he does."

"Very well!" said Nancy coming up,—"good reason! Ellen don't set *him* up any, does she? I wish you'd just seen her once, the time when Miss Fortune was abed,—the way she'd look out for him! Mr. Van Brunt's as good as at home in that house sure enough; whoever's down stairs."

"Bless her dear little heart!" said his mother.

"A good name is better than precious ointment."

August had come, and John was daily expected home. One morning Miss Fortune was in the lower kitchen, up to the elbows in making a rich fall cheese; Ellen was busy up-stairs, when her aunt shouted to her to "come and see what was all that splashing and crashing in the garden." Ellen ran out.

"O aunt Fortune," said she,—"Timothy has broken down the fence and got in."

"Timothy!" said Miss Fortune,—"what Timothy?"

"Why Timothy, the near ox," said Ellen laughing;—"he has knocked down the fence over there where it was low, you know."

"The near ox!" said Miss Fortune,—"I wish he warn't quite so near this time. Mercy! he'll be at the corn and over everything. Run and drive him into the barn-yard, can't you?"

But Ellen stood still and shook her head. "He wouldn't stir for me," she said;—"and besides I am as afraid of that ox as can be. If it was Clover I wouldn't mind."

"But he'll have every bit of the corn eaten up in five minutes! Where's Mr. Van Brunt?"

"I heard him say he was going home till noon," said Ellen.

"And Sam Larkens is gone to mill—and Johnny Low is laid up with the shakes. Very careless of Mr. Van Brunt!" said Miss Fortune, drawing her arms out of the cheese-tub wringing off the whey,—"I wish he'd mind his own oxen. There was no business to be a low place in the fence! Well come along! you aint afraid with me, I suppose."

Ellen followed, at a respectful distance. Miss Fortune however feared the face of neither man nor beast; she pulled up a bean pole, and made such a show of fight that Timothy after looking at her a little, fairly turned tail, and marched out at the breach he had made. Miss Fortune went after, and

rested not till she had driven him quite into the meadow;—get him into the barn-yard she could not.

"You aint worth a straw, Ellen!" said she when she came back;—"couldn't you ha' headed him and driv' him into the barn-yard? Now that plaguy beast will just be back again by the time I get well to work. He ha'n't done much mischief yet—there's Mr. Van Brunt's salary he's made a pretty mess of; I'm glad on't! He should ha' put potatoes, as I told him. I don't know what's to be done—I can't be leaving my cheese to run and mind the garden every minute, if it was full of Timothys; and *you'd* be scared if a mosqueto flew at you;—you had better go right off for Mr. Van Brunt and fetch him straight home—serve him right! he has no business to leave things so. Run along,—and don't let the grass grow under your feet!

Ellen wisely thought her pony's feet would do the business quicker. She ran and put on her gingham dress and saddled and bridled the Brownie in three minutes; but before setting off she had to scream to her aunt that Timothy was just coming round the corner of the barn again; and Miss Fortune rushed out to the garden as Ellen and the Brownie walked down to the gate.

The weather was fine, and Ellen thought with herself it was an ill wind that blew no good. She was getting a nice ride in the early morning, that she would not have had but for Timothy's lawless behavior. To ride at that time was particularly pleasant and rare; and forgetting how she had left poor Miss Fortune between the ox and the cheesetub, Ellen and the Brownie cantered on in excellent spirits.

She looked in vain as she passed his grounds to see Mr. Van Brunt in the garden or about the barn. She went on to the little gate of the courtyard, dismounted, and led the Brownie in. Here she was met by Nancy who came running from the way of the barn-yard.

"How d'ye do Nancy?" said Ellen;—"where's Mr. Van Brunt?"

"Goodness! Ellen!—what do you want?"

"I want Mr. Van Brunt,—where is he?"

"Mr. Van Brunt!—he's out in the barn,—but he's used himself up."

"Used himself up! what do you mean?"

"Why he's fixed himself in fine style;—he's fell through the trap-door and broke his leg."

"O Nancy!" screamed Ellen,—"he hasn't! How could he?"

"Why easy enough if he didn't look where he was going,—there's so much hay on the floor. But it's a pretty bad place to fall."

"How do you known his leg is broken?"

"'Cause he says so, and anybody with eyes can see it must be. I'm going over to Hitchcock's to get somebody to come and help in with him; for you know me and Mrs. Van Brunt aint Samsons."

"Where is Mrs. Van Brunt?"

"She's out there—in a terrible to do."

Nancy sped on to the Hitchcock's; and greatly frightened and distressed Ellen ran over to the barn, trembling like an aspen. Mr. Van Brunt was lying in the lower floor, just where he had fallen; one leg doubled under him in such a way as left no doubt it must be broken. He had lain there some time before any one found him; and on trying to change his position when he saw his mother's distress, he had fainted from pain. She sat by weeping most bitterly. Ellen could bear but one look at Mr. Van Brunt; that one sickened her. She went up to his poor mother and getting down on her knees by her side put both arms round her neck.

"*Don't* cry so, dear Mrs. Van Brunt," (Ellen was crying so she could hardly speak herself,)—"pray don't do so!—he'll be better—Oh what shall we do?"

"Oh aint it dreadful!" said poor Mrs. Van Brunt;—"O 'Brahm, 'Brahm! my son!—the best son that ever was to me—O to see him there—aint it dreadful? he's dying!"

"O no he isn't," said Ellen,—"O no he isn't!—what shall we do, Mrs. Van Brunt?—what shall we do?"

"The doctor!" said Mrs. Van Brunt,—"he said 'send for the doctor;'—but I can't go, and there's nobody to send. O he'll die!—O my dear 'Brahm! I wish it was me!"

"What doctor?" said Ellen;—"I'll find somebody to go; what doctor?"

"Dr. Gibson, he said; but he's away off to Thirlwall; and he's been lying here all the morning a'ready!—nobody found him—he couldn't make us hear. O isn't it dreadful!"

"O don't cry so, dear Mrs. Van Brunt," said Ellen, pressing her cheek to the poor old lady's;—"he'll be better—he will! I've got the Brownie here and I'll ride over to Mrs. Hitchcock's and get somebody to go right away for the doctor. I won't be long,—we'll have him here in a little while! *don't* feel so bad!"

"You're a dear blessed darling!" said the old lady, hugging and kissing her,—"if ever there was one. Make haste dear, if you love him!—he loves you."

Ellen stayed but to give her another kiss. Trembling so that she could hardly stand she made her way back to the house, led out the Brownie again, and set off full speed for Mrs. Hitchcock's. It was well her pony was sure-footed, for letting the reins hang, Ellen bent over his neck crying bitterly, only urging him now and then to greater speed; till at length the feeling that she had something to do came to her help. She straightened herself, gathered up her reins, and by the time she reached Mrs. Hitchcock's was looking calm again, though very sad and very earnest. She did not alight, but stopped before the door and called Jenny. Jenny came out expressing her pleasure.

"Dear Jenny," said Ellen,—"isn't there somebody here that will go right off to Thirlwall for Dr. Gibson? Mr. Van Brunt has broken his leg, I am afraid, and wants the doctor directly."

"Why dear Ellen," said Jenny, "the men have just gone off this minute to Mrs. Van Brunt's. Nancy was here for them to come and help move him in a great hurry. How did it happen? I couldn't get anything out of Nancy."

"He fell down through the trap-door. But dear Jenny, isn't there *anybody* about? O," said Ellen clasping her hands,—"I want somebody to go for the doctor *so* much!"

"There aint a living soul!" said Jenny; "two of the men and all the teams are 'way on the other side of the hill ploughing, and Pa and June and Black Bill have gone over, as I told you; but I don't believe they'll be enough. Where's his leg broke?"

"I didn't meet them," said Ellen;—"I came away only a little while after Nancy."

"They went 'cross lots I guess,—that's how it was; and that's the way Nancy got the start of you."

"What shall I do?" said Ellen. She could not bear to wait till they returned; if she rode back she might miss them again, besides the delay; and then a man on foot would make a long journey of it. Jenny told her of a house or two where she might try for a messenger; but they were strangers to her; she could not make up her mind to ask such a favor of them. Her friends were too far out of the way.

"I'll go myself!" she said suddenly. "Tell 'em, dear Jenny, will you, that I have gone for Dr. Gibson and that I'll bring him back as quick as ever I can. I know the road to Thirlwall."

"But Ellen! you mustn't," said Jenny;—"I am afraid to have you go all that way alone. Wait till the men come back,—they won't be long."

"No I can't, Jenny," said Ellen,—"I can't wait; I must go. You needn't be afraid. Tell 'em I'll be as quick as I can."

"But see, Ellen!" cried Jenny as she was moving off,—"I don't like to have you!"

"I must Jenny. Never mind."

"But see, Ellen!" cried Jenny again,—"if you *will* go—if you don't find Dr. Gibson just get Dr. Marshchalk,—he's every bit as good and some folks think he's better;—he'll do just as well. Good-bye!"

Ellen nodded and rode off. There was a little fluttering of the heart at taking so much upon herself; she had never been to Thirlwall but once since the first time she saw it. But she thought of Mr. Van Brunt, suffering for help which could not be obtained, and it was impossible for her to hesitate. "I am sure I am doing right," she thought,—"and what is there to be afraid of? If I ride two miles alone, why shouldn't I four?—And I am doing right—God will take care of me." Ellen earnestly asked him to do so; and after that she felt pretty easy. "Now dear Brownie," said she patting his neck,—"you and I have work to do to-day; behave like a good little horse as you are." The Brownie answered with a little cheerful kind of neigh, as much as to say, Never fear me!—They trotted on nicely.

But nothing could help that's being a disagreeable ride. Do what she would, Ellen felt a little afraid when she found herself on a long piece of road where she had never been

alone before. There were not many houses on the way; the few there were looked strange; Ellen did not know exactly where she was, or how near the end of her journey; it seemed a long one. She felt rather lonely;—a little shy of meeting people, and yet a little unwilling to have the intervals between them so very long. She repeated to herself, "I am doing right—God will take care of me,"—still there was a nervous trembling at heart. Sometimes she would pat her pony's neck and say, "Trot on dear Brownie! we'll soon be there!"—by way of cheering herself; for certainly the Brownie needed no cheering, and was trotting on bravely. Then the thought of Mr. Van Brunt, as she had seen him lying on the barn floor, made her feel sick and miserable; many tears fell during her ride when she remembered him. "Heaven will be a good place," thought little Ellen as she went;—"there will be no sickness, no pain, no sorrow; but Mr. Van Brunt!—I wonder if he is fit to go to heaven?"—This was a new matter of thought and uneasiness, not now for the first time in Ellen's mind; and so the time passed till she crossed the bridge over the little river and saw the houses of Thirlwall stretching away in the distance. Then she felt comfortable.

Long before, she had bethought her that she did not know where to find Dr. Gibson, and had forgotten to ask Jenny. For one instant Ellen drew bridle, but it was too far to go back, and she recollected anybody could tell her where the doctor lived. When she got to Thirlwall however Ellen found that she did not like to ask *anybody;* she remembered her old friend Mrs. Forbes of the Star inn, and resolved she would go there in the first place. She rode slowly up the street, looking carefully till she came to the house. There was no mistaking it; there was the very same big star over the front door that had caught her eye from the coach-window, and there was the very same boy or man, Sam, lounging on the sidewalk. Ellen reined up and asked him to ask Mrs. Forbes if she would be so good as to come out to her for one minute. Sam gave her a long Yankee look and disappeared, coming back again directly with the landlady.

"How d'ye do, Mrs. Forbes?" said Ellen, holding out her hand;—"don't you know me? I am Ellen Montgomery—

that you were so kind to, and gave me bread and milk,—when I first came here,—Miss Fortune's—"

"O bless your dear little heart," cried the landlady; "don't I know you! and aint I glad to see you! I must have a kiss. Bless you! I couldn't mistake you in Jerusalem, but the sun was in my eyes in that way I was a'most blind. But aint you grown though! Forget you? I guess I ha'n't! there's one o' your friends wouldn't let me do that in a hurry; if I ha'n't seen you I've heerd on you. But what are you sitting there in the sun for? come in—come in—and I'll give you something better than bread and milk this time. Come! jump down."

"O I can't, Mrs. Forbes," said Ellen,—"I am in a great hurry;—Mr. Van Brunt has broken his leg, and I want to find the doctor."

"Mr. Van Brunt!" cried the landlady. "Broken his leg! The land's sakes! how did he do that? *he* too!"

"He fell down through the trap-door in the barn; and I want to get Dr. Gibson as soon as I can to come to him. Where does he live, Mrs. Forbes?"

"Dr. Gibson? you won't catch him to hum, dear; he's flying round somewheres. But how come the trap-door to be open? and how happened Mr. Van Brunt not to see it afore he put his foot in it? Dear! I declare I'm real sorry to hear you tell. How happened it, darlin'? I'm cur'ous to hear."

"I don't know, Mrs Forbes," said Ellen,—"but oh where shall I find Dr. Gibson? Do tell me!—he ought to be there now;—oh help me! where shall I go for him?"

"Well, I declare," said the landlady, stepping back a pace,—"I don' know as I can tell—there aint no sort o' likelihood that he's to hum at this time o' day—Sam! you lazy feller, you ha'n't got nothing to do but to gape at folks, ha' you seen the doctor go by this forenoon?"

"I seen him go down to Miss' Perriman's," said Sam,—"Miss' Perriman was a dyin'—Jim Barstow said."

"How long since?" said his mistress.

But Sam shuffled and shuffled, looked every way but at Ellen or Mrs. Forbes, and "didn' know."

"Well then," said Mrs. Forbes, turning to Ellen,—"I don' know but you might about as well go down to the post-office—but if *I* was you, I'd just get Dr. Marshchalk instead! he's

a smarter man than Dr. Gibson any day in the year; and he aint quite so awful high neither, and that's something. *I'd* get Dr. Marshchalk; they say there aint the like o' him in the country for settin' bones; it's quite a gift;—he takes to it natural like."

But Ellen said Mr. Van Brunt wanted Dr. Gibson, and if she could she must find him.

"Well," said Mrs. Forbes, "every one has their fancies; —*I* wouldn't let Dr. Gibson come near me with a pair of tongs;—but anyhow if you must have him, your best way is to go right straight down to the post-office and ask for him there,—maybe you'll catch him."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Ellen;—"where is the post-office?"

"It's that whitefaced house down street," said the landlady, pointing with her finger where Ellen saw no lack of whitefaced houses,—"you see that big red store with the man standing out in front?—the next white house below that is Miss' Perriman's; just run right in and ask for Dr. Gibson. Good bye, dear,—I'm real sorry you can't come in;—that first white house."

Glad to get free, Ellen rode smartly down to the post-office. Nobody before the door; there was nothing for it but to get off here and go in; she did not know the people either. "Never mind! wait for me a minute, dear Brownie, like a good little horse as you are!"

No fear of the Brownie. He stood as if he did not mean to budge again in a century. At first going in Ellen saw nobody in the post-office; presently, at an opening in a kind of boxed up place in one corner a face looked out and asked what she wanted.

"Is Dr. Gibson here?"

"No," said the owner of the face, with a disagreeable kind of smile.

"Isn't this Miss Perriman's house?"

"You are in the right box, my dear, and no mistake," said the young man,—"but then it aint Dr. Gibson's house, you know."

"Can you tell me, sir, where I can find him?"

"Can't indeed—the doctor never tells me where he is

going, and I never ask him. I am sorry I didn't this morning, for your sake."

The way, and the look, made the words extremely disagreeable, and furthermore Ellen had an uncomfortable feeling that neither was new to her. Where *had* she seen the man before? she puzzled herself to think. Where but in a dream had she seen that bold ill-favored face, that horrible smile, that sandy hair,—she knew! It was Mr. Saunders, the man who had sold her the merino at St. Clair and Fleury's. She knew him; and she was verry sorry to see that he knew her. All she desired now was to get out of the house and away; but on turning she saw another man, older and respectable-looking, whose face encouraged her to ask again if Dr. Gibson was there. He was not, the man said; he had been there and gone.

"Do you know where I should be likely to find him, sir?"

"No I don't," said he;—"who wants him?"

"I wan't to see him, sir."

"For yourself?"

"No sir; Mr. Van Brunt has broken his leg and wants Dr. Gibson to come directly and set it."

"Mr. Van Brunt!" said he,—"Farmer Van Brunt that lives down towards the Cat's back? I'm very sorry! How did it happen?"

Ellen told as shortly as possible, and again begged to know where she might look for Dr. Gibson.

"Well," said he, "the best plan I can think of will be for you—How did you come here?"

"I came on horseback, sir."

"Ah—well—the best plan will be for you to ride up to his house; maybe he'll have left word there, and anyhow *you* can leave word for him to come down as soon as he gets home. Do you know where the doctor lives?"

"No sir."

"Come here," said he pulling her to the door,—"you can't see it from here; but you must ride up street till you have passed two churches; one on the right hand first, and then a good piece beyond you'll come to another red brick one on the left hand;—and Dr. Gibson lives in the next block

but one after that, on the other side;—anybody will tell you the house. Is that your horse?"

"Yes sir. I'm very much obliged to you."

"Well I will say!—if you ha'n't the prettiest fit out in Thirlwall—shall I help you? will you have a cheer?"

"No I thank you sir; I'll bring him up to this step; it will do just as well. I am *very* much obliged to you, sir."

He did not seem to hear her thanks; he was all eyes; and with his clerk stood looking after her till she was out of sight.

Poor Ellen found it a long way up to the doctor's. The post-office was near the lower end of the town and the doctor's house was near the upper; she passed one church, and then the other, but there was a long distance between, or what she thought so. Happily the Brownie did not seem tired at all; his little mistress *was* tired, and disheartened too. And there, all this time, was poor Mr. Van Brunt lying without a doctor! She could not bear to think of it.

She jumped down when she came to the block she had been told of, and easily found the house where Dr. Gibson lived. She knocked at the door. A grey-haired woman with a very dead-and-alive face presented herself. Ellen asked for the doctor.

"He aint to hum."

"When will he be at home?"

"Couldn't say."

"Before dinner?"

The woman shook her head.—"Guess not till late in the day."

"Where is he gone?"

"He is gone to Babcock—gone to 'attend a consummation,' I guess he told me—Babcock is a considerable long way."

Ellen thought a minute.

"Can you tell me where Dr. Marshchalk lives?"

"I guess you'd better wait till Dr. Gibson comes back, ha'n't you?" said the woman coaxingly;—"he'll be along by-and-by. If you'll leave me your name I'll give it to him."

"I cannot wait," said Ellen,—"I am in a dreadful hurry. Will you be so good as to tell me where Dr. Marshchalk lives?"

"Well—if so be you're in such a takin you can't wait—you know where Miss Forbes lives?"

"At the inn?—the Star?—yes."

"He lives a few doors this side o' her'n; you'll know it the first minute you set your eyes on it—it's painted a bright yaller."

Ellen thanked her, once more mounted, and rode down the street.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

And he had ridden o'er dale and down
By eight o'clock in the day,
When he was ware of a bold Tanner,
Came riding along the way.

OLD BALLAD.

THE yellow door, as the old woman had said, was not to be mistaken. Again Ellen dismounted and knocked; then she heard a slow step coming along the entry, and the pleasant kind face of Miss Janet appeared at the open door. It was a real refreshment, and Ellen wanted one.

"Why it's dear little—aint it?—her that lives down to Miss Fortune Emerson's?—yes, it is;—come in dear; I'm very glad to see you. How's all at your house?"

"Is the doctor at home, ma'am?"

"No dear, he aint to home just this minute, but he'll be in directly. Come in;—is that your horse?—just kitch him to the post there so he won't run away, and come right in. Who did you come along with?"

"Nobody ma'am; I came alone," said Ellen while she obeyed Miss Janet's directions.

"Alone!—on that 'ere little skittish creeter?—he's as handsome as a picture too—why do tell if you warn't afraid? it a'most scares me to think of it."

"I was a little afraid," said Ellen, as she followed Miss Janet along the entry,—"but I couldn't help that. You think the doctor will soon be in, ma'am?"

"Yes dear, sure of it," said Miss Janet, kissing Ellen and taking off her bonnet;—"he won't be five minutes, for it's a'most dinner time. What's the matter dear? is Miss Fortune sick again?"

"No ma'am," said Ellen sadly,—"Mr. Van Brunt has fallen through the trap-door in the barn and broken his leg."

"Oh!" cried the old lady with a face of real horror,—"you don't tell me! Fell through the trap-door! and he aint a light weight neither;—oh that is a lamentable event! And how is the poor old mother, dear?"

"She is very much troubled, ma'am," said Ellen, crying at the remembrance;—"and he has been lying ever since early this morning without anybody to set it; I have been going round and round for a doctor this ever so long."

"Why warn't there nobody to come but you, you poor lamb?" said Miss Janet.

"No ma'am; nobody quick enough; and I had the Brownie there, and so I came."

"Well cheer up, dear! the doctor will be here now and we'll send him right off; he won't be long about his dinner, I'll engage. Come and set in this big cheer—do!—it'll rest you; I see you're a'most tired out, and it aint a wonder. There—don't that feel better? now I'll give you a little sup of dinner, for you won't want to swallow it at the rate Leander will his'n. Dear! dear!—to think of poor Mr. Van Brunt. He's a likely man too;—I'm very sorry for him and his poor mother. A kind body she is as ever the sun shined upon."

"And so is he," said Ellen.

"Well so I dare say," said Miss Janet,—"but I don't know so much about him; howsever he's got everybody's good word as far as I know;—he's a likely man."

The little room into which Miss Janet had brought Ellen was very plainly furnished indeed, but as neat as hands could make it. The carpet was as crumbless and lintless as if meals were never taken there nor work seen; and yet a little table ready set for dinner forbade the one conclusion, and a huge basket of naperies in one corner showed that Miss Janet's industry did not spend itself in housework alone. Before the fire stood a pretty good-sized kettle, and a very appetising smell came from it to Ellen's nose. In spite of sorrow and anxiety her ride had made her hungry. It was not without pleasure that she saw her kind hostess arm herself with a deep plate and tin dipper, and carefully taking off the pot-cover so that no drops might fall on the hearth, proceed to ladle out a goodly supply of what Ellen knew was that excellent country dish called pot-pie. Excellent it is when well

made, and that was Miss Janet's. The pieces of crust were white and light like new bread; the very tit-bits of the meat she culled out for Ellen; and the soup gravy poured over all would have met even Miss Fortune's wishes, from its just degree of richness and exact seasoning. Smoking hot it was placed before Ellen on a little stand by her easy chair, with some nice bread and butter; and presently Miss Janet poured her out a cup of tea; "for," she said, "Leander never could take his dinner without it." Ellen's appetite needed no silver fork. Tea and pot-pie were never better liked; yet Miss Janet's enjoyment was perhaps greater still. She sat talking and looking at her little visitor with secret but immense satisfaction.

"Have you heard what fine doings we're a going to have here by-and-by?" said she. "The doctor's tired of me; he's going to get a new housekeeper;—he's going to get married some of these days."

"Is he!" said Ellen. "Not to Jenny!"

"Yes indeed he is—to Jenny—Jenny Hitchcock; and a nice little wife she'll make him. You're a great friend of Jenny, I know."

"How soon?" said Ellen.

"O not just yet—by-and-by—after we get a little smarted up, I guess;—before a great while. Don't you think he'll be a happy man?"

Ellen could not help wondering, as the doctor just then came in and she looked up at his unfortunate three-cornered face, whether Jenny would be a happy woman? But as people often do, she judged only from the outside; Jenny had not made such a bad choice after all.

The doctor said he would go directly to Mr. Van Brunt after he had been over to Mrs. Sibnorth's; it wouldn't be a minute. Ellen meant to ride back in his company; and having finished her dinner waited now only for him. But the one minute passed—two minutes—ten—twenty—she waited impatiently, but he came not.

"I'll tell you how it must be," said his sister,—"he's gone off without his dinner calculating to get it at Miss Hitchcock's,—he'd be glad of the chance. That's how it is, dear; and you'll have to ride home alone; I'm real sorry. S'pose you stop till evening, and I'll make the doctor go along with you.

But oh dear! maybe he wouldn't be able to neither; he's got to go up to that tiresome Mrs. Robin's; it's too bad. Well take good care of yourself darling;—couldn't you stop till it's cooler?—well come and see me as soon as you can again, but don't come without someone else along! Good-bye! I wish I could keep you,"

She went to the door to see her mount, and smiled and nodded her off.

Ellen was greatly refreshed with her rest and her dinner; it grieved her, that the Brownie had not fared as well. All the refreshment that kind words and patting could give him, she gave; promised him the freshest of water and the sweetest of hay when he should reach home; and begged him to keep up his spirits and hold on for a little longer. It may be doubted whether the Brownie understood the full sense of her words, but he probably knew what the kind tones and gentle hand meant. He answered cheerfully; threw up his head and gave a little neigh, as much as to say, *he* wasn't going to mind a few hours of sunshine; and trotted on as if he knew his face was towards home,—which no doubt he did. Luckily it was not a very hot day; for August, it was remarkably cool and beautiful; indeed there was little very hot weather ever known in Thirlwall. Ellen's heart felt easier, now that her business was done! and when she had left the town behind her and was again in the fields, she was less timid than she had been before; she was going towards home; that makes a great difference; and every step was bringing her nearer. "I am glad I came, after all," she thought;—"but I hope I shall never have to do such a thing again. But I am glad I came."

She had no more than crossed the little bridge however, when she saw what brought her heart into her mouth. It was Mr. Saunders, lolling under a tree. What could he have come there for at that time of day? A vague feeling crossed her mind that if she could only get past him she should pass a danger; she thought to ride by without seeming to see him, and quietly gave the Brownie a pat to make him go faster. But as she drew near Mr. Saunders rose up, came to the middle of the road, and taking hold of her bridle checked her pony's pace so that he could walk alongside; to Ellen's unspeakable dismay.

"What's kept you so long?" said he;—"I've been looking out for you this great while. Had hard work to find the doctor?"

"Won't you please to let go of my horse," said Ellen, her heart beating very fast;—"I am in a great hurry to get home;—please don't keep me."

"O I want to see you a little," said Mr. Saunders;—"you aint in such a hurry to get away from me as that comes to, are you?"

Ellen was silent.

"It's quite a long time since I saw you last," said he;—"how have the merinos worn?"

Ellen could not bear to look at his face and did not see the expression which went with these words, yet she *felt* it."

"They have worn very well," said she, "but I want to get home very much—*please* let me go."

"Not yet—not yet," said he,—"O no, not yet. I want to talk to you; why what are you in such a devil of a hurry for? I came out on purpose; do you think I am going to have all my long waiting for nothing?"

Ellen did not know what to say; her heart sprang with a nameless pang to the thought, if she ever got free from this! Meanwhile she was not free.

"Whose horse is that you're on?"

"Mine," said Ellen.

"Your'n! that's a likely story. I guess he aint your'n, and so you won't mind if I touch him up a little;—I want to see how well you can sit a horse."

Passing his arm through the bridle as he said these words, Mr. Saunders led the pony down to the side of the road where grew a clump of high bushes; and with some trouble cut off a long stout sapling. Ellen looked in every direction while he was doing this, despairing, as she looked, of aid from any quarter of the broad quiet open country. O for wings! But she could not leave the Brownie if she had them.

Returning to the middle of the road, Mr. Saunders amused himself as they walked along with stripping off all the leaves and little twigs from his sapling, leaving it when done a very good imitation of an ox-whip in size and length, with a fine lash-like point. Ellen watched him in an ecstasy of apprehension, afraid alike to speak or to be silent.

"There! what do you think of that?" said he, giving it two or three switches in the air to try its suppleness and toughness;—"don't that look like a whip? Now we'll see how he'll go!"

"Please don't do anything with it," said Ellen earnestly;—"I never touch him with a whip,—he doesn't need it,—he isn't used to it; pray, pray do not!"

"O we'll just tickle him a little with it," said Mr. Saunders coolly,—"I want to see how well you'll sit him;—just make him caper a little bit."

He accordingly applied the switch lightly to the Brownie's heels, enough to annoy without hurting him. The Brownie showed signs of uneasiness, quitted his quiet pace, and took to little starts and springs and whiskey motions, most unpleasing to his rider.

"O do not!" cried Ellen, almost beside herself,—"he's very spirited, and I don't know what he will do if you trouble him."

"You let me take care of that," said Mr. Saunders;—"if he troubles *me* I'll give it to him! If he rears up, only you catch hold of his mane and hold on tight, and you won't fall off;—I want to see him rear."

"But you'll give him bad tricks!" said Ellen. "O pray don't do so! It's very bad for him to be teased. I am afraid he will kick if you do so, and he'd be ruined if he got a habit of kicking. O *please* let us go!" said she with the most acute accent of entreaty,—"I want to be home."

"You keep quiet," said Mr. Saunders coolly;—"if he kicks I'll give him such a lathering as he never had yet; he won't do it but once. I aint a-going to hurt him, but I am a-going to make him rear;—no, I won't,—I'll make him leap over a rail, the first bar-place we come to; that'll be prettier."

"O you musn't do that," said Ellen;—"I have not learned to leap yet; I couldn't keep on; you musn't do that if you please."

"You just hold fast and hold your tongue. Catch hold of his ears, and you'll stick on fast enough; if you can't you may get down, for I am going to make him take the leap whether you will or no."

Ellen feared still more to get off and leave the Brownie to her tormentor's mercy than to stay where she was and take her chance. She tried in vain, as well as she could, to soothe

her horse; the touches of the whip coming now in one place and now in another, and some of them pretty sharp, he began to grow very frisky indeed; and she began to be very much frightened for fear she should suddenly be jerked off. With a good deal of presence of mind, though wrought up to a terrible pitch of excitement and fear, Ellen gave her best attention to keeping her seat as the Brownie sprang and started and jumped to one side and the other; Mr. Saunders holding the bridle as loose as possible so as to give him plenty of room. For some little time he amused himself with this game, the horse growing more and more irritated. At length a smart stroke of the whip upon his haunches made the Brownie spring in a way that brought Ellen's heart into her mouth, and almost threw her off.

"Oh don't!" cried Ellen, bursting into tears for the first time,—she had with great effort commanded them back until now;—"poor Brownie!—How can you! Oh please let us go!—please let us go!"

For one minute she dropped her face in her hands.

"Be quiet!" said Mr. Saunders. "Here's a bar-place—now for the leap!"

Ellen wiped away her tears, forced back those that were coming, and began the most earnest remonstrance and pleading with Mr. Saunders that she knew how to make. He paid her no sort of attention. He led the Brownie to the side of the road, let down all the bars but the lower two, let go the bridle, and stood a little off prepared with his whip to force the horse to take the spring.

"I tell you I shall fall," said Ellen, reining him back. "How can you be so cruel!—I want to go home!"

"Well you aint a going home yet. Get off, if you are afraid."

But though trembling in every nerve from head to foot, Ellen fancied the Brownie was safer so long as he had her on his back; she would not leave him. She pleaded her best, which Mr. Saunders heard as if it was amusing, and without making any answer kept the horse capering in front of the bars, pretending every minute he was going to whip him up to take the leap. His object however was merely to gratify the smallest of minds by teasing a child he had a spite against; he had no intention to risk breaking her bones by a

fall from her horse; so in time he had enough of the bar-place; took the bridle again and walked on. Ellen drew breath a little more freely.

"Did you hear how I handled your old gentleman after that time?" said Mr. Saunders.

Ellen made no answer.

"No one ever affronts me that don't hear news of it afterwards, and so he found to his cost. *I* paid him off, to my heart's content. I gave the old fellow a lesson to behave in future. I forgive him now entirely. By the way I've a little account to settle with you—didn't you ask Mr. Perriman this morning if Dr. Gibson was in the house?"

"I don't know who it was," said Ellen.

"Well, hadn't I told you just before he warn't there?"

Ellen was silent.

"What did you do that for, eh? Didn't you believe me?"

Still she did not speak.

"I say!" said Mr. Saunders, touching the Brownie as he spoke,—"did you think I told you a lie about it?—eh?"

"I didn't know but he might be there," Ellen forced herself to say.

"Then you didn't believe me?" said he, always with that same smile upon his face; Ellen knew that.

"Now that warn't handsome of you—and I'm agoing to punish you for it, somehow or 'nother; but it aint pretty to quarrel with ladies, so Brownie and me'll settle it together. You won't mind that I dare say."

"What are going to do?" said Ellen, as he once more drew her down to the side of the fence.

"Get off and you'll see," said he, laughing;—"get off and you'll see."

"What do you want to do?" repeated Ellen, though scarce able to speak the words.

"I'm just going to tickle Brownie a little, to teach you to believe honest folks when they speak the truth; get off!"

"No I won't," said Ellen, throwing both arms round the neck of her pony;—"poor Brownie!—you sha'n't do it. He hasn't done any harm, nor I either; you are a bad man!"

"Get off!" repeated Mr. Saunders.

"I will not!" said Ellen, still clinging fast.

"Very well," said he coolly,—"then I will take you off;

it don't make much difference. We'll go along a little further till I find a nice stone for you to sit down upon. If you had got off then I wouldn't ha' done much to him, but I'll give it to him now! If he hasn't been used to a whip he'll know pretty well what it means by the time I have done with him; and then you may go home as fast as you can."

It is very likely Mr. Saunders would have been as good, or as bad, as his word. His behavior to Ellen in the store at New York, and the measures taken by the old gentleman who had befriended her, had been the cause of his dismissal from the employ of Messrs. St. Clair and Fleury. Two or three other attempts to get into business had come to nothing, and he had been obliged to return to his native town. Ever since, Ellen and the old gentleman had lived in his memory as objects of the deepest spite;—the one for interfering, the other for having been the innocent cause; and he no sooner saw her in the post-office than he promised himself revenge, such revenge as only the meanest and most cowardly spirit could have taken pleasure in. His best way of distressing Ellen, he found, was through her horse; he had almost satisfied himself; but very naturally his feeling of spite had grown stronger and blunter with indulgence, and he meant to wind up with such a treatment of her pony, real or seeming, as he knew would give great pain to the pony's mistress. He was prevented.

As they went slowly along, Ellen still clasping the Brownie's neck and resolved to cling to him to the last, Mr. Saunders making him caper in a way very uncomfortable to her, one was too busy and the other too deafened by fear to notice the sound of fast approaching hoofs behind them. It happened that John Humphreys had passed the night at Ventnor; and having an errand to do for a friend at Thirlwall had taken that road, which led him but a few miles out of his way, and was now at full speed on his way home. He had never made the Brownie's acquaintance, and did not recognize Ellen as he came up; but in passing them some strange notion crossing his mind he wheeled his horse round directly in front of the astonished pair. Ellen quitted her pony's neck, and stretching out both arms towards him exclaimed, almost shrieked, "Oh, John! John! send him away! make him let me go!"

"What are you about, sir?" said the new-comer sternly.

"It's none of your business!" answered Mr. Saunders, in whom rage for the time overcame cowardice.

"Take your hand off the bridle!"—with a slight touch of the riding-whip upon the hand in question.

"Not for you, brother," said Mr. Saunders sneeringly;—"I'll walk with any lady I've a mind to. Look out for yourself!"

"We will dispense with your further attendance," said John coolly. "Do you hear me?—do as I order you!"

The speaker did not put himself in a passion, and Mr. Saunders, accustomed for his own part to make bluster serve instead of prowess, despised a command so calmly given.—Ellen, who knew the voice, and still better could read the eye, drew conclusions very different. She was almost breathless with terror. Saunders was enraged and mortified at an interference that promised to baffle him; he was a stout young man, and judged himself the stronger of the two, and took notice besides that the stranger had nothing in his hand but a slight riding-whip. He answered very insolently and with an oath; and John saw that he was taking the bridle in his left hand and shifting his sapling whip so as to bring the club end of it uppermost. The next instant he aimed a furious blow at his adversary's horse. The quick eye and hand of the the rider disappointed that with a sudden swerve. In another moment, and Ellen hardly saw how, it was so quick,—John had dismounted, taken Mr. Saunders by the collar, and hurled him quite over into the gulley at the side of the road, where he lay at full length without stirring.

"Ride on Ellen!" said her deliverer.

She obeyed. He stayed a moment to say to his fallen adversary a few words of pointed warning as to ever repeating his offence; then remounted and spurred forward to join Ellen. All her power of keeping up was gone, now that the necessity was over. Her head was once more bowed on her pony's neck, her whole frame shaking with convulsive sobs; she could scarce with great effort keep from crying out aloud.

"Ellie!"—said her adopted brother, in a voice that could hardly be known for the one that had last spoken. She had no words, but as he gently took one of her hands, the convulsive squeeze it gave him shewed the state of nervous excitement she was in. It was very long before his utmost efforts

could soothe her, or she could command herself enough to tell him her story. When at last told, it was with many tears.

"Oh how could he! how could he!" said poor Ellen;—"how could he do so!—it was very hard!"—

An involuntary touch of the spurs made John's horse start.

"But what took you to Thirlwall alone?" said he;—"you have not told me that yet."

Ellen went back to Timothy's invasion of the cabbages, and gave him the whole history of the morning.

"I thought when I was going for the doctor, at first," said she,—"and then afterwards when I had found him, what a good thing it was that Timothy broke down the garden fence and got in this morning; for if it had not been for that I should not have gone to Mr. Van Brunt's;—and then again after that I thought, if he only had'nt!"

"Little things often draw after them long trains of circumstances," said John,—"and that shows the folly of those people who think that God does not stoop to concern himself about trifles;—life, and much more than life, may hang upon the turn of a hand. But Ellen, you must ride no more alone.—Promise me that you will not."

"I will not to Thirlwall certainly," said Ellen,—"but mayn't I to Alice's?—how can I help it?"

"Well—to Alice's—that is a safe part of the country;—but I should like to know a little more of your horse before trusting you even there."

"Of the Brownie?" said Ellen;—"O he is as good as he can be; you need not be afraid of him; he has no trick at all; there never was such a good little horse."

John smiled. "How do you like mine?" said he.

"Is that your new one? O what a beauty!—O me, what a beauty! I didn't look at him before. O I like him very much! he's handsomer than the Brownie;—do you like him?"

"Very well!—this is the first trial I have made of him. I was at Mr. Marshman's last night, and they detained me this morning or I should have been here much earlier. I am very well satisfied with him, so far."

"And if you had *not* been detained!"—said Ellen.

"Yes Ellie—I should not have fretted at my late breakfast and having to try Mr. Marshman's favorite mare, if I had known what good purpose the delay was to serve. I wish I could have been here half an hour sooner, though."

"Is his name the Black Prince?" said Ellen, returning to the horse.

"Yes, I believe so; but you shall change it Ellie, if you can find one you like better."

"O I cannot!—I like that very much. How beautiful he is! Is he good?"

"I hope so," said John smiling;—"if he is not I shall be at the pains to make him so. We are hardly acquainted yet."

Ellen looked doubtfully at the black horse and his rider, and patting the Brownie's neck, observed with great satisfaction that *he* was very good.

John had been riding very slowly on Ellen's account; they now mended their pace. He saw however that she still looked miserably, and exerted himself to turn her thoughts from everything disagreeable. Much to her amusement he rode round her two or three times, to view her horse and show her his own; commended the Brownie; praised her bridle hand; corrected several things about her riding; and by degrees engaged her in very animated conversation. Ellen roused up; the color came back to her cheeks; and when they reached home and rode round to the glass door she looked almost like herself.

She sprang off as usual without waiting for any help. John scarce saw that she had done so, when Alice's cry of joy brought him to the door, and from that together they went in to their father's study. Ellen was left alone on the lawn. Something was the matter; for she stood with swimming eyes and a trembling lip, rubbing her stirrup, which really needed no polishing, and forgetting the tired horses, which would have had her sympathy at any other time. What *was* the matter? Only—that Mr. John had forgotten the kiss he always gave her on going or coming. Ellen was jealous of it as a pledge of sistership, and could not want it; and though she tried as hard as she could to get her face in order, so that she might go in and meet them, somehow it seemed to take a great while. She was still busy with her stirrup, when she suddenly felt two hands on her shoulders,

and looking up received the very kiss the want of which she had been lamenting. But John saw the tears in her eyes, and asked her, she thought with somewhat of a comical look, what the matter was? Ellen was ashamed to tell, but he had her there by the shoulders, and besides, whatever that eye demanded she never knew how to keep back; so with some difficulty she told him.

"You are a foolish child, Ellie," said he gently, and kissing her again. "Run in out of the sun while I see to the horses."

Ellen ran in, and told her long story to Alice; and then feeling very weary and weak she sat on the sofa and lay resting in her arms in a state of the most entire and unruffled happiness. Alice however after a while transferred her to bed, thinking with good reason that a long sleep would be the best thing for her.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

> Now is the pleasant time,
> The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
> To the night-warbling bird; that now awake,
> Tunes sweetest her love-labored song; now reigns
> Full orbed the moon, and with more pleasing light
> Shadowy, sets off the face of things.
>
> MILTON.

WHEN Ellen came out of Alice's room again it was late in the afternoon. The sun was so low that the shadow of the house had crossed the narrow lawn and mounted up near to the top of the trees; but on them he was still shining brightly, and on the broad landscape beyond, which lay open to view through the gap in the trees. The glass door was open; the sweet summer air and the sound of birds and insects and fluttering leaves floated into the room, making the stillness musical. On the threshold pussy sat crouched, with his fore-feet doubled under his breast, watching with intense gravity the operations of Margery, who was setting the table on the lawn just before his eyes. Alice was paring peaches.

"O we are going to have tea out of doors, aren't we?" said Ellen. "I'm very glad. What a lovely evening, isn't it? Just look at pussy, will you, Alice? don't you believe he knows what Margery is doing?—Why didn't you call me to go along with you after peaches?"

"I thought you were doing the very best thing you possibly could, Ellie, my dear. How do you do?"

"O nicely now! Where's Mr. John? I hope he won't ask for my last drawing to-night,—I want to fix the top of that tree before he sees it."

"*Fix* the top of your tree, you little Yankee?" said Alice; —"what do you think John would say to that?—*un*fix it you mean; it is too stiff already, isn't it?"

"Well what *shall* I say?' said Ellen laughing. "I am sorry that is Yankee, for I suppose one must speak English. —I want to do something to my tree, then.—Where is he, Alice?"

"He is gone down to Mr. Van Brunt's, to see how he is, and to speak to Miss Fortune about you on his way back."

"O how kind of him!—he's *very* good; that is just what I want to know; but I am sorry, after his long ride"—

"He don't mind *that*, Ellie. He'll be home presently."

"How nice those peaches look;—they are as good as strawberries, don't you think so?—better,—I don't know which is best;—but Mr. John likes these best, don't he? Now you've done!—shall I set them on the table?—and here's a pitcher of splendid cream, Alice!"

"You had better not tell John so, or he will make you define *splendid*."

John came back in good time, and brought word that Mr. Van Brunt was doing very well, so far as could be known; also, that Miss Fortune consented to Ellen's remaining where she was. He wisely did not say, however, that her consent had been slow to gain till he had hinted at his readiness to provide a substitute for Ellen's services; on which Miss Fortune had instantly declared she did not want her and she might stay as long as she pleased. This was all that was needed to complete Ellen's felicity.

"Wasn't your poor horse too tired to go out again this afternoon, Mr. John?"

"I did not ride him, Ellie; I took yours."

"The Brownie!—did you?—I'm very glad! How did you like him? But perhaps *he* was tired a little, and you couldn't tell so well to-day."

"He was not tired with any work *you* had given him, Ellie;—perhaps he may be a little now."

"Why?" said Ellen, somewhat alarmed.

"I have been trying him; and instead of going quietly along the road we have been taking some of the fences in our way. As I intend practising you at the bar, I wished to make sure in the first place that he knew his lesson."

"Well how did he do?"

"Perfectly well—I believe he is a good little fellow. I

wanted to satisfy myself if he was fit to be trusted with you; and I rather think Mr. Marshman has taken care of that."

The whole wall of trees was in shadow when the little family sat down to table; but there was still the sun-lit picture behind; and there was another kind of sunshine in every face at the table. Quietly happy the whole four, or at least the whole three, were; first, in being together,—after that, in all things beside. Never was tea so refreshing, or bread and butter so sweet, or the song of birds so delightsome. When the birds were gone to their nests, the crieket and grasshopper and tree-toad and katy-did, and nameless other songsters, kept up a concert,—nature's own,—in delicious harmony with woods and flowers and summer breezes and evening light. Ellen's cup of enjoyment was running over. From one beautiful thing to another her eye wandered,—from one joy to another her thoughts went,—till her full heart fixed on the God who had made and given them all, and that Redeemer whose blood had been their purchase-money. From the dear friends beside her, the best-loved she had in the world, she thought of the one dearer yet from whom death had separated her;—yet living still,—and to whom death would restore her, thanks to Him who had burst the bonds of death and broken the gates of the grave, and made a way for his ransomed to pass over. And the thought of Him was the joyfullest of all!

"You look happy, Ellie," said her adopted brother.

"So I am," said Ellen, smiling a very bright smile.

"What are you thinking about?"—

But John saw it would not do to press his question.

"You remind me," said he, "of some old fairy story that my childish ears received, in which the fountains of the sweet and bitter waters of life were said to stand very near each other, and to mingle their streams but a little way from their source. Your tears and smiles seem to be brothers and sisters;—whenever we see one we may be sure the other is not far off."

"My dear Jack!" said Alice laughing,—"what an unhappy simile! Are brothers and sisters always found like that?"

"I wish they were," said John sighing and smiling;—"but my last words had nothing to do with my simile as you call it."

When tea was over, and Margery had withdrawn the things and taken away the table, they still lingered in their places. It was far too pleasant to go in. Mr. Humphreys moved his chair to the side of the house, and throwing a handkerchief over his head to defend him from the mosquitoes, a few of which were buzzing about, he either listened, meditated, or slept;—most probably one of the two latter; for the conversation was not very loud nor very lively; it was happiness enough merely to breathe so near each other. The sun left the distant fields and hills; soft twilight stole through the woods, down the gap, and over the plain; the grass lost its green; the wall of trees grew dark and dusky; and very faint and dim showed the picture that was so bright a little while ago. As they sat quite silent, listening to what nature had to say to them, or letting fancy and memory take their way, the silence was broken—hardly broken—by the distinct far-off cry of a whip-poor-will. Alice grasped her brother's arm, and they remained motionless, while it came nearer, nearer,—then quite near,—with its clear, wild, shrill, melancholy note sounding close by them again and again,—strangely, plaintively,—then leaving the lawn, it was heard further and further off, till the last faint "whip-poor-will," in the far distance, ended its pretty interlude. It was almost too dark to read faces, but the eyes of the brother and sister had sought each other and remained fixed till the bird was out of hearing; then Alice's hand was removed to his, and her head found its old place on her brother's shoulder.

"Sometimes John," said Alice, "I am afraid I have one tie too strong to this world. I cannot bear—as I ought—to have you away from me."

Her brother's lips were instantly pressed to her forehead.

"I may say to you Alice, as Col. Gardiner said to his wife, 'we have an eternity to spend together!'"

"I wonder," said Alice after a pause,—"how those can bear to love or be loved, whose affection can see nothing but a blank beyond the grave."

"Few people, I believe," said her brother, "would come exactly under that description; most flatter themselves with a vague hope of reunion after death."

"But that is a miserable hope—very different from ours."

"Very different indeed!—and miserable; for it can only

deceive; but ours is sure. 'Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'"

"Precious!" said Alice. "How exactly fitted to every want and mood of the mind are the sweet Bible words."

"Well!" said Mr. Humphreys, rousing himself,—"I am going in! These mosquitoes have half eaten me up. Are you going to sit there all night?"

"We are thinking of it, papa," said Alice cheerfully.

He went in, and was heard calling Margery for a light.

They had better lights on the lawn. The stars began to peep out through the soft blue, and as the blue grew deeper they came out more and brighter, till all heaven was hung with lamps. But that was not all. In the eastern horizon, just above the low hills that bordered the far side of the plain, a white light, spreading and growing and brightening, promised the moon, and promised that she would rise very splendid; and even before she came began to throw a faint lustre over the landscape. All eyes were fastened, and exclamations burst, as the first silver edge showed itself, and the moon rapidly rising looked on them with her whole broad bright face; lighting up not only their faces and figures but the wide country view that was spread out below, and touching most beautifully the trees in the edge of the gap, and faintly the lawn; while the wall of wood stood in deeper and blacker shadow than ever.

"Isn't that beautiful!" said Ellen.

"Come round here, Ellie," said John;—"Alice may have you all the rest of the year, but when I am at home you belong to me. What was your little head busied upon a while ago?"

"When?" said Ellen.

"When I asked you"—

"O I know,—I remember. I was thinking"—

"Well?"—

"I was thinking—do you want me to tell you?"

"Unless you would rather not."

"I was thinking about Jesus Christ," said Ellen in a low tone.

"What about him, dear Ellie?" said her brother, drawing her closer to his side.

"Different things,—I was thinking of what he said about

little children,—and about what he said, you know,—'In my Father's house are many mansions;'—and I was thinking that mamma was there; and I thought—that we all"—

Ellen could get no further.

"'He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed,'" said John softly. "'This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life; and who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Not death, nor things present, nor things to come. But he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure;'—let us remember that too."

"Mr. John," said Ellen presently,—"don't you like some of the chapters in the Revelation very much?"

"Yes—very much. Why?—do you?"

"Yes. I remember reading parts of them to mamma, and that is one reason, I suppose; but I like them very much. There is a great deal I can't understand, though."

"There is nothing finer in the Bible than parts of that book," said Alice.

"Mr. John," said Ellen,—"what is meant by the 'white stone?'"

"'And in the stone a new name written?'"—

"Yes—that I mean."

"Mr. Baxter says it is the sense of God's love in the heart; and indeed that is it 'which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it.' This, I take it, Ellen, was Christian's certificate, which he used to comfort himself with reading in, you remember?"

"Can a child have it?" said Ellen thoughtfully.

"Certainly—many children have had it—you may have it. Only seek it faithfully. 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.'—And Christ said, 'he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest myself to him!' There is no failure in these promises, Ellie; he that made them is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

For a little while each was busy with his own meditations. The moon meanwhile, rising higher and higher, poured a flood of light through the gap in the woods before them, and stealing among the trees here and there lit up a spot of ground under their deep shadow. The distant picture lay in mazy brightness. All was still, but the ceaseless chirrup of insects

and gentle flapping of leaves; the summer air just touched their cheeks with the lightest breath of a kiss, sweet from distant hay-fields, and nearer pines and hemlocks, and other of nature's numberless perfume-boxes. The hay-harvest had been remarkably late this year.

"This is higher enjoyment," said John,—"than half those who make their homes in rich houses and mighty palaces have any notion of."

"But, cannot rich people look at the moon?" said Ellen.

"Yes, but the taste for pure pleasures is commonly gone when people make a trade of pleasure."

"Mr. John"—Ellen began.

"I will forewarn you," said he,—"that Mr. John has made up his mind he will do nothing more for you. So if you have anything to ask, it must lie still,—unless you will begin again."

Ellen drew back. He looked grave, but she saw Alice smiling.

"But what shall I do?" said she, a little perplexed and half laughing. "What do you mean Mr. John? What does he mean Alice?"

"You could speak without a 'Mr.' to me this morning when you were in trouble."

"Oh!" said Ellen laughing,—"I forgot myself then."

"Have the goodness to forget yourself permanently for the future."

"Was that man hurt this morning, John?" said his sister.

"What man?"

"That man you delivered Ellen from."

"Hurt? no—nothing material; I did not wish to hurt him. He richly deserved punishment, but it was not for me to give it."

"He was in no hurry to get up," said Ellen.

"I do not think he ventured upon that till we were well out of the way. He lifted his head and looked after us as we rode off."

"But I wanted to ask something," said Ellen,—"O! what is the reason the moon looks so much larger when she first gets up than she does afterwards?"

"Whom are you asking?"

"You."

"And who is you? Here are two people in the moonlight."

"Mr. John Humpheys,—Alice's brother, and that Thomas calls 'the young master,'" said Ellen laughing.

"You are more shy of taking a leap than your little horse is," said John smiling,—"but I shall bring you up to it yet. What is the cause of the sudden enlargement of my thumb?"

He had drawn a small magnifying glass from his pocket and held it between his hand and Ellen,

"Why it is not enlarged," said Ellen,—"it is only magnified."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Why, the glass makes it look larger."

"Do you know how, or why?"

"No."

He put up the glass again.

"But what do you mean by that?" said Ellen;—"there is no magnifying glass between us and the moon to make *her* look larger."

"You are sure of that?"

"Why yes!" said Ellen;—"I am perfectly sure; there is nothing in the world. There she is, right up there, looking straight down upon us, and there is nothing between."

"What is it that keeps up that pleasant fluttering of leaves in the wood?"

"Why, the wind."

"And what is the wind?"

"It is air—air moving, I suppose."

"Exactly. Then there *is* something between us and the moon."

"The air! But, Mr. John, one can see quite clearly through the air; it doesn't make things look larger or smaller."

"How far do you suppose the air reaches from us towards the moon?"

"Why, all the way, don't it?"

"No—only about forty miles. If it reached all the way there would indeed be no magnifying glass in the case."

"But how is it?" said Ellen. "I don't understand."

"I cannot tell you to-night, Ellie. There is a long ladder of knowledge to go up before we can get to the moon, but we will begin to mount to-morrow, if nothing happens.

Alice, you have that little book of Conversations on Natural Philosophy, which you and I used to delight ourselves with in old time?"

"Safe and sound in the book-case," said Alice. "I have thought of giving it to Ellen before, but she has been busy enough with what she had already."

"I have done Rollin now, though," said Ellen;—"that is lucky. I am ready for the moon."

This new study was begun the next day, and Ellen took great delight in it. She would have run on too fast in her eagerness but for the steady hand of her teacher; he obliged her to be very thorough. This was only one of her items of business. The weeks of John's stay were as usual not merely weeks of constant and varied delight, but of constant and swift improvement too.

A good deal of time was given to the riding-lessons. John busied himself one morning in preparing a bar for her on the lawn; so placed that it might fall if the horse's heels touched it. Here Ellen learned to take first standing, and then running, leaps. She was afraid at first, but habit wore that off; and the bar was raised higher and higher, till Margery declared she "couldn't stand and look at her going over it." Then John made her ride without the stirrup, and with her hands behind her, while he, holding the horse by a long halter, made him go round in a circle, slowly at first, and afterwards trotting and cantering, till Ellen felt almost as secure on his back as in a chair. It took a good many lessons however to bring her to this, and she trembled very much at the beginning. Her teacher was careful and gentle, but determined; and whatever he said she did, tremble or no tremble; and in general loved her riding lessons dearly.

Drawing too went on finely. He began to let her draw things from nature; and many a pleasant morning the three went out together with pencils and books and work, and spent hours in the open air. They would find a pretty point of view, or a nice shady place where the breeze came, and where there was some good old rock with a tree beside it, or a piece of fence, or the house or barn in the distance, for Ellen to sketch; and while she drew and Alice worked, John read aloud to them. Sometimes he took a pencil too, and Alice read; and often, often, pencils, books and work were all laid

down; and talk,—lively, serious, earnest, always delightful,—took the place of them. When Ellen could not understand the words, at least she could read the faces; and that was a study she was never weary of. At home there were other studies and much reading; many tea drinkings on the lawn, and even breakfastings, which she thought upleasanter still.

As soon as it was decided that Mr. Van Brunt's leg was doing well, and in a fair way to be sound again, Ellen went to see him; and after that rarely let two days pass without going again. John and Alice used to ride with her so far, and taking a turn beyond while she made her visit, call for her on their way back. She had a strong motive for going in the pleasure her presence always gave, both to Mr. Van Brunt and his mother. Sam Larkens had been to Thirlwall and seen Mrs. Forbes, and from him they had heard the story of her riding up and down the town in search of the doctor; neither of them could forget it. Mrs. Van Brunt poured out her affection in all sorts of expressions whenever she had Ellen's ear; her son was not a man of many words; but Ellen knew his face and manner well enough without them, and read there whenever she went into his room what gave her great pleasure.

"How do you do, Mr. Van Brunt?" she said on one of these occasions.

"O I'm getting along, I s'pose," said he;—"getting along as well as a man can that's lying on his back from morning to night;—prostrated, as 'Squire Dennison said his corn was t'other day."

"It is very tiresome, isn't it?" said Ellen.

"It's the tiresomest work that ever was, for a man that has two arms to be adoing nothing, day after day. And what bothers me is the wheat in that ten-acre lot, that *ought* to be prostrated too, and aint, nor aint like to be, as I know, unless the rain comes and does it. Sam and Johnny 'll make no head-way at all with it—I can tell as well as if I see 'em."

"But Sam is good, isn't he?" said Ellen.

"Sam's as good a boy as ever was; but then Johnny Low is mischievous, you see, and he gets Sam out of his tracks once in a while. I never see a finer growth of wheat. I had a sight rather cut and harvest the hull of it than to lie here

and think of it getting spoiled. I'm a'most out o' conceit o' trap-doors, Ellen."

Ellen could not help smiling.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"There aint nothing," said he;—"I wish there was. How are you coming along at home?"

"I don't know," said Ellen;—"I am not there just now, you know; I am staying up with Miss Alice again."

"O ay! while her brother's at home. He's a splendid man, that young Mr. Humphreys, aint he?"

"O *I* knew that a great while ago," said, Ellen, the bright color of pleasure overspreading her face.

"Well, *I* didn't, you see, till the other day, when he came here, very kindly, to see how I was getting on. I wish something would bring him again. I never heard a man talk I liked to hear so much.

Ellen secretly resolved something *should* bring him; and went on with a purpose she had had for some time in her mind.

"Wouldn't it be pleasant, while you are lying there and can do nothing,—wouldn't you like to have me read something to you, Mr. Van Brunt? *I* should like to, very much."

"It's just like you," said he gratefully,—"to think of that; but I wouldn't have you be bothered with it."

"It wouldn't indeed. I should like it very much."

"Well, if you've a mind," said he;—"I can't say but it would be a kind o' comfort to keep that grain out o' my head a while. Seems to me I have cut and housed it all three times over already. Read just whatever you have a mind to. If you was to go over a last year's almanac, it would be as good as a fiddle to me."

"I'll do better for you than that, Mr. Van Brunt," said Ellen, laughing in high glee at having gained her point.—She had secretly brought her Pilgrim's Progress with her, and now with marvelous satisfaction drew it forth.

"I ha'n't been as much of a reader as I had ought to," said Mr. Van Brunt, as she opened the book and turned to the first page;—"but however, I understand my business pretty well; and a man can't be everything to once. Now let's hear what you've got there."

With a throbbing heart, Ellen began; and read, notes and all, till the sound of tramping hoofs and Alice's voice made

her break off. It encouraged and delighted her to see that Mr. Van Brunt's attention was perfectly fixed. He lay still, without moving his eyes from her face, till she stopped; then thanking her he declared that was a "first-rate book," and he "should like mainly to hear the hull on it."

From that time Ellen was diligent in her attendance on him. That she might have more time for reading than the old plan gave her, she set off by herself alone some time before the others, of course riding home with them. It cost her a little sometimes, to forego so much of their company; but she never saw the look of grateful pleasure with which she was welcomed without ceasing to regret her self-denial. How Ellen blessed those notes as she went on with her reading! They said exactly what she wanted Mr. Van Brunt to hear, and in the best way, and were too short and simple to interrupt the interest of the story. After a while she ventured to ask if she might read him a chapter in the Bible. He agreed very readily; owning "he hadn't ought to be so long without reading one as he had been." Ellen then made it a rule to herself, without asking any more questions, to end every reading with a chapter in the Bible; and she carefully sought out those that might be most likely to take hold of his judgment or feelings. They took hold of her own very deeply, by the means; what was strong, or tender, before, now seemed to her too mighty to be withstood; and Ellen read not only with her lips but with her whole heart the precious words, longing that they might come with their just effect upon Mr. Van Brunt's mind.

Once as she finished reading the tenth chapter of John, a favorite chapter, which between her own feeling of it and her strong wish for him had moved her even to tears, she cast a glance at his face to see how he took it. His head was a little turned to one side, and his eyes closed; she thought he was asleep. Ellen was very much disappointed. She sank her head upon her book and prayed that a time might come when he would know the worth of those words. The touch of his hand startled her.

"What is the matter?" said he. "Are you tired?"

"No," said Ellen looking hastily up;—"O no! I'm not tired."

"But what ails you?" said the astonished Mr. Van Brunt; "what have you been a crying for? what's the matter?"

"Oh never mind," said Ellen, brushing her hand over her eyes,—"it's no matter."

"Yes, but I want to know," said Mr. Van Brunt;—"you shan't have anything to vex you that *I* can help; what is it?"

"It is nothing, Mr. Van Brunt," said Ellen, bursting into tears again,—"only I thought you were asleep—I—I thought you didn't care enough about the Bible to keep awake—I want *so* much that you should be a Christian!

He half groaned and turned his head away.

"What makes you wish that so much?" said he after a minute or two.

"Because I want you to be happy," said Ellen,—"and I know you can't without."

"Well, I am pretty tolerable happy," said he;—"as happy as most folks I guess."

"But I want you to be happy when you die, too," said Ellen;—"I want to meet you in heaven."

"I hope I will go there, surely," said he gravely,—"when the time comes."

Ellen was uneasily silent, not knowing what to say.

"I aint as good as I ought to be," said he presently, with a half sigh;—"I aint good enough to go to heaven—I wish I was. *You* are, I do believe."

"I! O no, Mr. Van Brunt, do not say that;—I am not good at all—I am full of wrong things."

"Well I wish I was full of wrong things too, in the same way," said he.

"But I am," said Ellen,—"whether you will believe it or not. Nobody is good, Mr. Van Brunt. But Jesus Christ has died for us,—and if we ask him he will forgive us, and wash away our sins, and teach us to love him, and make us good, and take us to be with him in heaven. O I wish you would ask him!" she repeated with an earnestness that went to his heart. "I don't believe any one can be very happy that doesn't love him."

"Is that what makes *you* happy?" said he.

"I have a great many things to make me happy," said Ellen soberly,—"but that is the greatest of all. It always makes me happy to think of him, and it makes everything else a thousand times pleasanter. I wish you knew how it is, Mr. Van Brunt."

He was silent for a little, and disturbed Ellen thought.

"Well!" said he at length,—"'taint the folks that thinks themselves the best that *is* the best always;—if you aint good I should like to know what goodness is. *There's* somebody that thinks you be," said he a minute or two afterwards, as the horses were heard coming to the gate.

"No, she knows me better than that," said Ellen.

"It isn't any *she* that I mean," said Mr. Van Brunt.—"There's somebody else out there, aint there?"

"Who?" said Ellen,—"Mr. John?—O no indeed he don't. It was only this morning he was telling me of something I did that was wrong.—Her eyes watered as she spoke.

"He must have mighty sharp eyes, then," said Mr. Van Brunt,—"for it beats all *my* powers of seeing things."

"And so he has," said Ellen, putting on her bonnet,—"he always knows what I am thinking of just as well as if I told him. Good bye!"

"Good bye," said he;—"I ha'n't forgotten what you've been saying, and I don't mean to."

How full of sweet pleasure was the ride home!

The "something wrong," of which Ellen had spoken, was this. The day before, it happened that Mr. John had broken her off from a very engaging book to take her drawing-lesson; and as he stooped down to give a touch or two to the piece she was to copy, he said, "I don't want you to read any more of that Ellie; it is not a good book for you." Ellen did not for a moment question that he was right, nor wish to disobey; but she had become very much interested, and was a good deal annoyed at having such a sudden stop put to her pleasure. She said nothing, and went on with her work. In a little while Alice asked her to hold a skein of cotton for her while she wound it. Ellen was annoyed again at the interruption; the harpstrings were jarring yet, and gave fresh discord at every touch. She had, however, no mind to let her vexation be seen; she went immediately and held the cotton, and as soon as it was done sat down again to her

drawing. Before ten minutes had passed Margery came to set the table for dinner; Ellen's papers and desk must move.

"Why it is not dinner-time yet this great while, Margery," said she;—"it isn't much after twelve."

"No, Miss Ellen," said Margery under her breath, for John was in one corner of the room reading,—"but by-and-by I'll be busy with the chops and frying the salsify, and I couldn't leave the kitchen;—if you'll let me have the table now."

Ellen said no more, and moved her things to a stand before the window; where she went on with her copying till dinner was ready. Whatever the reason was, however, her pencil did not work smoothly; her eye did not see true; and she lacked her usual steady patience. The next morning, after an hour and more's work and much painstaking, the drawing was finished. Ellen had quite forgotten her yesterday's trouble. But when John came to review her drawing, he found several faults with it; pointed out two or three places in which it had suffered from haste and want of care; and asked her how it had happened. Ellen knew it happened yesterday. She was vexed again, though she did her best not to show it; she stood quietly and heard what he had to say. He then told her to get ready for her riding lesson.

"Mayn't I just make this right first?" said Ellen;—"it won't take me long."

"No," said he,—"you have been sitting long enough; I must break you off. The Brownie will be here in ten minutes."

Ellen was impatiently eager to mend the bad places in her drawing, and impatiently displeased at being obliged to ride first. Slowly and reluctantly she went to get ready; John was already gone; she would not have moved so leisurely if he had been anywhere within seeing distance. As it was, she found it convenient to quicken her movements; and was at the door ready as soon as he and the Brownie. She was soon thoroughly engaged in the management of herself and her horse; a little smart riding shook all the ill-humor out of her, and she was entirely herself again. At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes they drew up under the shade of a tree to let the Brownie rest a little. It was a warm day and John had taken off his hat and stood resting too, with his arm

leaning on the neck of the horse. Presently he looked round to Ellen, and asked her, with a smile, if she felt right again?

"Why?" said Ellen, the crimson of her cheeks mounting to her forehead. But her eye sunk immediately at the answering glance of his. He then in very few words set the matter before her, with such a happy mixture of pointedness and kindness, that while the reproof, coming from him, went to the quick, Ellen yet joined with it no thought of harshness or severity. She was completely subdued however; the rest of the riding-lesson had to be given up; and for an hour Ellen's tears could not be stayed. But it was, and John had meant it should be, a strong check given to her besetting sin. It had a long and lasting effect.

CHAPTER XL.

Speed. But tell me true, will 't be a match?
Lann. Ask my dog; if he say, ay, it will; if he say, no, it will; if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will.—TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IN due time Mr. Van Brunt was on his legs again, much to everybody's joy, and much to the advantage of fields, fences, and grain. Sam and Johnny found they must "spring to," as their leader said; and Miss Fortune declared she was thankful she could draw a long breath again, for do what she would she couldn't be everywhere. Before this John and the Black Prince had departed, and Alice and Ellen were left alone again.

"How long will it be, dear Alice," said Ellen, as they stood sorrowfully looking down the road by which he had gone,—"before he will be through that—before he will be able to leave Doncaster?"

"Next summer."

"And what will he do then?"

"Then he will be ordained."

"Ordained?—what is that?"

"He will be solemnly set apart for the work of the ministry, and appointed to it by a number of clergymen."

"And then will he come and stay at home, Alice?"

"I don't know what then, dear Ellen," said Alice, sighing;—"he may for a little; but papa wishes very much that before he is settled anywhere he should visit England and Scotland and see our friends there. Though I hardly think John will do it unless he sees some further reason for going. If he do not, he will probably soon be called somewhere—Mr. Marshman wants him to come to Randolph. I don't know how it will be."

"Well!" said Ellen, with a kind of acquiescing sigh,—"at any rate now we must wait until next Christmas."

The winter passed with little to mark it except the usual visits to Ventnor; which, however, by common consent Alice and Ellen had agreed should *not* be when John was at home. At all other times they were much prized and enjoyed. Every two or three months Mr. Marshman was sure to come for them, or Mr. Howard, or perhaps the carriage only with a letter; and it was bargained for that Mr. Humphreys should follow to see them home. It was not always that Ellen could go, but the disappointments were seldom; she too had become quite domesticated at Ventnor, and was sincerely loved by the whole family. Many as were the times she had been there, it had oddly happened that she had never met her old friend of the boat again; but she was very much attached to old Mr. and Mrs. Marshman, and Mrs. Chauncey and her daughter; the latter of whom reckoned all the rest of her young friends as nothing compared with Ellen Montgomery. Ellen, in her opinion, did everything better than anyone else of her age.

"She has good teachers," said Mrs. Chauncey.

"Yes indeed! I should think she had. Alice,—I should think anybody would learn well with her;—and Mr. John—I suppose he's as good, though I don't know so much about him; but he must be a great deal better teacher than Mr. Sandford, mamma, for Ellen draws *ten times* as well as I do!"

"Perhaps that is your fault and not Mr. Sandford's," said her mother,—"though I rather think you overrate the difference."

"I am sure I take pains enough, if that's all," said the little girl;—"what more can I do, mamma? But Ellen is so pleasant about it always; she never seems to think she does better than I; and she is always ready to help me and take ever so much time to show me how to do things;—she is *so* pleasant; isn't she, mamma? I know I have heard you say she is very polite."

"She is certainly that," said Mrs. Gillespie,—"and there is a grace in her politeness that can only proceed from great natural delicacy and refinement of character;—how she can have such manners, living and working in the way you say she does, I confess is beyond my comprehension."

"One would not readily forget the notion of good-breeding in the society of Alice and John Humphreys," said Miss Sophia.

"And Mr. Humphreys," said Mrs. Chauncey.

"There is no society about him," said Miss Sophia;—"he don't say two dozen words a day."

"But she is not with them," said Mrs. Gillespie.

"She is with them a great deal, aunt Matilda," said Ellen Chauncey,—"and they teach her everything, and she does learn! She must be very clever; don't you think she is, mamma? Mamma, she beats me entirely in speaking French, and she knows all about English history; and arithmetic!—and did you ever hear her sing, mamma?"

"I do not believe she beats you, as you call it, in generous estimation of others," said Mrs. Chauncey, smiling, and bending forward to kiss her daughter;—"but what is the reason Ellen is so much better read in history than you?"

"I don't know, mamma, unless—I wish I wasn't so fond of reading stories."

"Ellen Montgomery is just as fond of them, I'll warrant," said Miss Sophia.

"Yes,—O I know she is fond of them; but then Alice and Mr. John don't let her read them, except now and then one."

"I fancy she does it though when their backs are turned," said Mrs. Gillespie.

"She! O, aunt Matilda! she wouldn't do the least thing they don't like for the whole world. I know she never reads a story when she is here, unless it is my Sunday books, without asking Alice first."

"She is a most extraordinary child!" said Mrs. Gillespie.

"She is a *good* child!" said Mrs. Chauncey.

"Yes, mamma, and that is what I wanted to say;—I do not think Ellen is so polite because she is so much with Alice and Mr. John, but because she is so sweet and good. I don't think she could *help* being polite.

"It is not that," said Mrs. Gillespie;—"mere sweetness and goodness would never give so much elegance of manner. As far as I have seen, Ellen Montgomery is a *perfectly* well-behaved child."

"That she is," said Mrs. Chauncey;—"but neither would any cultivation or example be sufficient for it without Ellen's thorough good principle and great sweetness of temper."

"That's exactly what *I* think, mamma," said Ellen Chauncey.

Ellen's sweetness of temper was not entirely born with her; it was one of the blessed fruits of religion and discipline. Discipline had not done with it yet. When the winter came on, and the house-work grew less, and with renewed vigor she was bending herself to improvement in all sorts of ways, it unluckily came into Miss Fortune's head that some of Ellen's spare time might be turned to account in a new line. With this lady, to propose and to do were two things always very near together. The very next day Ellen was summoned to help her down stairs with the big spinning-wheel. Most unsuspiciously, and with her accustomed pleasantness, Ellen did it. But when she was sent up again for the rolls of wool; and Miss Fortune after setting up the wheel, put one of them into her hand and instructed her how to draw out and twist the thread of yarn, she saw all that was coming. She saw it with dismay. So much yarn as Miss Fortune might think it well she should spin, so much time must be taken daily from her beloved reading and writing drawing and studying; her very heart sunk within her. She made no remonstrance, unless her disconsolate face might be thought one; she stood half a day at the big spinning-wheel, fretting secretly, while Miss Fortune went round with an inward chuckle visible in her countenance, that in spite of herself increased Ellen's vexation. And this was not the annoyance of a day; she must expect it day after day through the whole winter. It was a grievous trial. Ellen cried for a great while when she got to her own room, and a long hard struggle was necessary before she could resolve to do her duty. "To be patient and quiet!—and spin nobody knows how much yarn—and my poor history and philosophy and drawing and French and reading!"—Ellen cried very heartily. But she knew what she ought to do; she prayed long, humbly, earnestly, that "her little rushlight might shine bright;"—and her aunt had no cause to complain of her. Sometimes, if overpressed, Ellen would ask Miss Fortune to let her stop; saying, as Alice had advised her, that *she* wished to have her do such and such things; Miss Fortune never made any objection; and the hours of spinning that wrought so many knots of yarn for

her aunt, wrought better things yet for the little spinner; patience and gentleness grew with the practice of them; this wearisome work was one of the many seemingly untoward things which in reality bring out good. The time Ellen *did* secure to herself was held the more precious and used the more carefully. After all it was a very profitable and pleasant winter to her.

John's visit came as usual at the holidays, and was enjoyed as usual; only that every one seemed to Ellen more pleasant than the last. The sole other event that broke the quiet course of things, (beside the journeys to Ventnor) was the death of Mrs. Van Brunt. This happened very unexpectedly and after a short illness, not far from the end of January. Ellen was very sorry; both for her own sake and Mr. Van Brunt's, who she was sure felt much, though according to his general custom he said nothing. Ellen felt for him none the less. She little thought what an important bearing this event would have upon her own future well-being.

The winter passed and the spring came. One fine mild pleasant afternoon, early in May, Mr. Van Brunt came into the kitchen and asked Ellen if she wanted to go with him and see the sheep salted. Ellen was seated at the table with a large tin pan in her lap, and before her a huge heap of white beans which she was picking over for the Saturday's favorite dish of pork and beans. She looked up at him with a hopeless face.

"I should like to go very much indeed, Mr. Van Brunt, but you see I can't. All these to do!"

"Beans, eh?" said he, putting one or two in his mouth. "Where's your aunt?"

Ellen pointed to the buttery. He immediately went to the door and rapped on it with his knuckles."

"Here ma'am!" said he,—"can't you let this child go with me? I want her along to help feed the sheep."

To Ellen's astonishment her aunt called to her through the closed door to "go along and leave the beans till she came back." Joyfully Ellen obeyed. She turned her back upon the beans, careless of the big heap which would still be there to pick over when she returned; and ran to get her bonnet. In all the time she had been in Thirlwall something had always

prevented her seeing the sheep fed with salt, and she went eagerly out of the door with Mr. Van Brunt to a new pleasure.

They crossed two or three meadows back of the barn to a low rocky hill covered with trees. On the other side of this they came to a fine field of spring wheat. Footsteps must not go over the young grain; Ellen and Mr. Van Brunt coasted carefully round by the fence to another piece of rocky woodland that lay on the far side of the wheat-field. It was a very fine afternoon. The grass was green in the meadow; the trees were beginning to show their leaves; the air was soft and spring-like. In great glee Ellen danced along, luckily needing no entertainment from Mr. Van Brunt, who was devoted to his salt-pan. His natural taciturnity seemed greater than ever; he amused himself all the way over the meadow with turning over his salt and tasting it, till Ellen laughingly told him she believed he was as fond of it as the sheep were; and then he took to chucking little bits of it right and left, at anything he saw that was big enough to serve for a mark. Ellen stopped him again by laughing at his wastefulness; and so they came to the wood. She left him then to do as he liked, while she ran hither and thither to search for flowers. It was slow getting through the wood. He was fain to stop and wait for her.

"Aren't these lovely?" said Ellen as she came up with her hands full of anemones,—"and look—there's the liverwort. I thought it must be out before now—the dear little thing!—but I can't find any blood-root, Mr. Van Brunt."

"I guess they're gone," said Mr. Van Brunt.

"I suppose they must," said Ellen. "I am sorry; I like them so much. O I believe I did get them earlier than this two years ago when I used to take so many walks with you. Only think of my not having been to look for flowers before this spring."

"It hadn't ought to ha' happened so, that's a fact," said Mr. Van Brunt. "I don't know how it has."

"O there are my yellow bells!" exclaimed Ellen;—"O you beauties! Aren't they, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"I won't say but what I think an ear of wheat's handsomer," said he with his half smile.

"Why Mr. Van Brunt! how can you?—but an ear of

wheat's pretty too.—O Mr. Van Brunt, what *is* that? Do get me some of it, will you, please? O how beautiful!—what is it?"

"That's black birch," said he;—"*'tis* kind o' handsome;—stop, I'll find you some oak blossoms directly.—There's some Solomon's seal—do you want some of that?"

Ellen sprang to it with exclamations of joy, and before she could rise from her stooping posture discovered some cowslips to be scrambled for. Wild columbine, the delicate corydalis, and more uvularias, which she called yellow bells, were added to her handful, till it grew a very elegant bunch indeed. Mr. Van Brunt looked complacently on, much as Ellen would at a kitten running round after its tail.

"Now I won't keep you any longer, Mr. Van Brunt," said she, when her hands were as full as they could hold;—"I have kept you a great while; you are very good to wait for me."

They took up their line of march again, and after crossing the last piece of rocky woodland came to an open hill-side, sloping gently up, at the foot of which were several large flat stones.

"But where are the sheep, Mr. Van Brunt?" said Ellen.

"I guess they aint fur," said he. "You keep quiet, 'cause they don't know you; and they are mighty scary. Just stand still there by the fence.—Ca-nan! ca-nan! Ca-nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan!"

This was the sheep call, and raising his voice Mr. Van Brunt made it sound abroad far over the hills. Again and again it sounded; and then Ellen saw the white nose of a sheep at the edge of the woods on the top of the hill. On the call's sounding again the sheep set forward, and in a long train they came running along a narrow footpath down towards where Mr. Van Brunt was standing with his pan. The soft tramp of a multitude of light hoofs in another direction turned Ellen's eyes that way, and there were two more single files of sheep running down the hill from different points in the woodland. The pretty things came scampering along, seeming in a great hurry, till they got very near; then the whole multitude came to a sudden halt, and looked very wistfully and doubtfully indeed at Mr. Van Brunt and the strange little figure standing so still by the fence. They seemed in

great doubt, every sheep of them, whether Mr. Van Brunt were not a traitor, who had put on a friend's voice and lured them down there with some dark evil intent, which he was going to carry out by means of that same dangerous-looking stranger by the fence. Ellen almost expected to see them turn about and go as fast as they had come. But Mr. Van Brunt gently repeating his call, went quietly up to the nearest stone and began to scatter the salt upon it, full in their view. Doubt was at an end; he had hung out the white flag; they flocked down to the stones, no longer at all in fear of double-dealing, and crowded to get at the salt; the rocks where it was strewn were covered with more sheep than Ellen would have thought it possible could stand upon them. They were like pieces of floating ice heaped up with snow, or queen-cakes with an immoderately thick frosting. It was one scene of pushing and crowding; those which had not had their share of the feast forcing themselves up to get at it, and shoving others off in consequence. Ellen was wonderfully pleased. It was a new and pretty sight, the busy hustling crowd of gentle creatures; with the soft noise of their tread upon grass and stones, and the eager devouring of the salt. She was fixed with pleasure, looking and listening; and did not move till the entertainment was over, and the body of the flock were carelessly scattering here and there, while a few that had perhaps been disappointed of their part still lingered upon the stones in the vain hope of yet licking a little saltness from them.

"Well," said Ellen, "I never knew what salt was worth before. How they do love it! Is it good for them, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"Good for them?" said he,—"to be sure it is good for them. There aint a critter that walks, as I know, that it aint good for,—'cept chickens, and it's very queer it kills them."

They turned to go homeward. Ellen had taken the empty pan to lay her flowers in, thinking it would be better for them than the heat of her hand; and greatly pleased with what she had come to see, and enjoying her walk as much as it was possible, she was going home very happy; yet she could not help missing Mr. Van Brunt's old sociableness. He was uncommonly silent, even for him, considering that he and Ellen

were alone together; and she wondered what had possessed him with a desire to cut down all the young saplings he came to that were large enough for walking sticks. He did not want to make any use of them, that was certain, for as fast as he cut and trimmed out one he threw it away and cut another. Ellen was glad when they got out into the open fields where there were none to be found.

"It is just about this time a year ago," said she, "that aunt Fortune was getting well of her long fit of sickness."

"Yes!" said Mr. Van Brunt, with a very profound air;—"something is always happening most years."

Ellen did not know what to make of this philosophical remark.

"I am very glad nothing is happening this year," said she;—"I think it is a great deal pleasanter to have things go on quietly."

"O something might happen without hindering things going on quietly, I s'pose,—mightn't it?"

"I don't know," said Ellen wonderingly;—"why Mr. Van Brunt what *is* going to happen?"

"I declare," said he half laughing,—"you're as cute as a razor; I didn't say there was anything going to happen, did I?"

"But is there?" said Ellen.

"Ha'n't your aunt said nothing to you about it?"

"Why no," said Ellen,—"she never tells me anything; what is it?"

"Why the story is," said Mr. Van Brunt,—"at least I know, for I've understood as much from herself, that—I believe she's going to be married before long."

"She!" exclaimed Ellen. "Married!—aunt Fortune!"

"I believe so," said Mr. Van Brunt, making a lunge at a tuft of tall grass and pulling off two or three spears of it, which he carried to his mouth.

There was a long silence, during which Ellen saw nothing in earth, air or sky, and knew no longer whether she was passing through woodland or meadow. To frame words into another sentence was past her power. They came in sight of the barn at length. She would not have much more time.

"Will it be soon, Mr. Van Brunt?"

"Why pretty soon, as soon as next week, I guess; so I thought it was time you ought to be told. Do you know to who?"

"I don't *know*," said Ellen in a low voice;—"I couldn't help guessing."

"I reckon you've guessed about right," said he, without looking at her.

There was another silence, during which it seemed to Ellen that her thoughts were tumbling head over heels, they were in such confusion.

"The short and the long of it is," said Mr. Van Brunt, as they rounded the corner of the barn,—"we have made up our minds to draw in the same yoke; and we're both on us pretty go-ahead folks, so I guess we'll contrive to pull the cart along. I had just as lieve tell you, Ellen, that all this was as good as settled a long spell back,—'afore ever you came to Thirlwall; but I was never agoing to leave my old mother without a home; so I stuck to her, and would, to the end of time, if I had never been married. But now she is gone, and there is nothing to keep me to the old place any longer. So now you know the hull on it, and I wanted you should."

With this particularly cool statement of his matrimonial views, Mr. Van Brunt turned off into the barn-yard, leaving Ellen to go home by herself. She felt as if she were walking on air while she crossed the chip-yard, and the very house had a seeming of unreality. Mechanically she put her flowers in water, and sat down to finish the beans; but the beans might have been flowers and the flowers beans for all the difference Ellen saw in them. Miss Fortune and she shunned each other's faces most carefully for a long time; Ellen felt it impossible to meet her eyes; and it is a matter of great uncertainty which in fact did first look at the other. Other than this there was no manner of difference in anything without or within the house. Mr. Van Brunt's being absolutely speechless was not a *very* uncommon thing.

CHAPTER XLI.

Poor little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou knowest not whither?

PRIOR.

As soon as she could Ellen carried this wonderful news to Alice, and eagerly poured out the whole story, her walk and all. She was somewhat disappointed at the calmness of her hearer.

"But you don't seem half as surprised as I expected, Alice; I thought you would be so much surprised."

"I am not surprised at all, Ellie."

"Not!—aren't you!—why did you know anything of this before?"

"I did not *know*, but I suspected. I thought it was very likely. I am *very* glad it is so."

"Glad! are you glad? I am so sorry;—why are you glad, Alice?"

"Why are you sorry, Ellie?"

"O because!—I don't know—it seems so queer!—I don't like it at all. I am very sorry indeed."

"For your aunt's sake, or for Mr. Van Brunt's sake?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, do you think he or she will be a loser by the bargain?"

"Why he, to be sure; I think he will; I don't think she will. I think he is a great deal too good. And besides—I wonder if he wants to really;—it was settled so long ago—maybe he has changed his mind since."

"Have you any reason to think so, Ellie?" said Alice smiling.

"I don't know—I don't think he seemed particulary glad."

"It will be safest to conclude that Mr. Van Brunt knows his own mind, my dear; and it is certainly pleasantest for us to hope so."

"But then, besides," said Ellen with a face of great perplexity and vexation,—I don't know—it don't seem right! How can I ever—must I, do you think I shall have to call him anything but Mr. Van Brunt?"

Alice could not help smiling again.

"What is your objection, Ellie?"

"Why because I *can't!*—I couldn't do it, somehow. It would seem so strange. Must I, Alice?—Why in the world are you glad, dear Alice?"

"It smooths my way for a plan I have had in my head; you will know by-and-by why I am glad, Ellie."

"Well I am glad if you are glad," said Ellen sighing;—"I don't know why I was so sorry, but I couldn't help it; I suppose I sha'n't mind it after a while."

She sat for a few minutes, musing over the possibility or impossibility of ever forming her lips to the words "uncle Abraham," "uncle Van Brunt," or barely "uncle;" her soul rebelled against all three. "Yet if he should think me unkind.—then I must,—oh rather fifty times over than that!" Looking up, she saw a change in Alice's countenance, and tenderly asked,

"What is the matter, dear Alice? what are you thinking about?"

"I am thinking, Ellie, how I shall tell you something that will give you pain."

"Pain! you needn't be afraid of giving me pain," said Ellen fondly, throwing her arms around her;—"tell me, dear Alice; is it something I have done that is wrong? what is it?"

Alice kissed her, and burst into tears.

"What is the matter, oh dear Alice!" said Ellen, encircling Alice's head with both her arms;—"Oh don't cry! do tell me what it is!"'

"It is only sorrow for you, dear Ellie."

"But why?" said Ellen in some alarm;—"why are you sorry for me? I don't care, if it don't trouble you, indeed I don't! Never mind me; is it something that troubles you, dear Alice?"

"No—except for the effect it may have on others."

"Then I can bear it," said Ellen;—"you need not be afraid to tell me dear Alice;—what is it? don't be sorry for me!"

But the expression of Alice's face was such that she could not help being afraid to hear; she anxiously repeated "what is it?"

Alice fondly smoothed back the hair from her brow, looking herself somewhat anxiously and somewhat sadly upon the uplifted face.

"Suppose Ellie," she said at length,—"that you and I were taking a journey together—a troublesome dangerous journey—and that *I* had a way of getting at once safe to the end of it;—would you be willing to let me go, and you do without me for the rest of the way?"

"I would rather you should take me with you," said Ellen, in a kind of maze of wonder and fear;—why where are you going, Alice?"

"I think I am going home, Ellie,—before you."

"Home?" said Ellen.

"Yes,—home I feel it to be; it is not a strange land; I thank God it is my *home* I am going to."

Ellen sat looking at her, stupified.

"It is your home too, love, I trust, and believe," said Alice tenderly;—"we shall be together at last. I am not sorry for myself; I only grieve to leave you alone,—and others,—but God knows best. We must both look to him."

"Why Alice," said Ellen starting up suddenly,—what do you mean? what do you mean?—I don't understand you—what do you mean?"

"Do you not understand me, Ellie?"

"But Alice!—but Alice—*dear* Alice—what makes you say so? is there anything the matter with you?

"Do I look well, Ellie?"

With an eye sharpened to painful keenness, Ellen sought in Alice's face for the tokens of what she wished and what she feared. It *had* once or twice lately flitted through her mind that Alice was very thin, and seemed to want her old strength, whether in riding, or walking, or any other exertion; and it *had* struck her that the bright spots of color in Alice's face were just like what her mother's cheeks used to wear in

her last illness. These thoughts had just come and gone; but now as she recalled them and was forced to acknowledge the justness of them, and her review of Alice's face pressed them home anew,—hope for a moment faded. She grew white, even to her lips.

"My poor Ellie! my poor Ellie!" said Alice, pressing her little sister to her bosom,—"it must be! We *must* say 'the Lord's will be done;'—we must not forget he does all things well."

But Ellen rallied; she raised her head again; she could not believe what Alice had told her. To her mind it seemed an evil *too great to happen;* it could not be! Alice saw this in her look, and again sadly stroked the hair from her brow. "It must be, Ellie, she repeated."

"But have you seen somebody?—have you asked somebody?" said Ellen;—"some doctor?"

"I have seen, and I have asked," said Alice;—"it was not necessary, but I have done both. They think as I do."

"But these Thirlwall doctors"—

"Not them; I did not apply to them. I saw an excellent physician at Randolph, the last time I went to Ventnor."

"And he said—"

"As I have told you."

Ellen's countenance fell—fell.

"It is easier for me to leave you than for you to be left,—I know that, my dear little Ellie! You have no reason to be sorry for me—I *am* sorry for you; but the hand that is taking me away is one that will touch neither of us but to do us good;—I know that too. We must both look away to our dear Saviour, and not for a moment doubt his love. I do not—you must not. Is it not said that 'he loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus?'"

"Yes," said Ellen, who never stirred her eyes from Alice's.

"And might he not—did it not rest with a word of his lips, to keep Lazarus from dying, and save his sisters from all the bitter sorrow his death caused them?"

Again Ellen said "yes," or her lips seemed to say it.

"And yet there were reasons, good reasons, why he should not, little as poor Martha and Mary could understand it.—

But had he at all ceased to *love them* when he bade all that trouble come? Do you remember, Ellie—oh how beautiful those words are!—when at last he arrived near the place, and first one sister came to him with the touching reminder that he might have saved them from this, and then the other,—weeping and falling at his feet, and repeating, 'Lord if thou hadst been here!'—when he saw their tears, and more, saw the torn hearts that tears could not ease,—he even wept with them too! Oh I thank God for those words! He saw reason to strike, and his hand did not spare; but his love shed tears for them! and he is just the same now."

Some drops fell from Alice's eyes, not sorrowful ones; Ellen had hid her face.

"Let us never doubt his love, dear Ellie, and surely then we can bear whatever that love may bring upon us. I do trust it. I do believe it shall be well with them that fear God. I believe it will be well for me when I die,—well for you my dear, dear Ellie,—well even for my father"—

She did not finish the sentence, afraid to trust herself.—But oh, Ellen knew what it would have been; and it suddenly startled into life all the load of grief that had been settling heavily on her heart. Her thoughts had not looked that way before;—now when they did, this new vision of misery was too much to bear. Quite unable to contain herself, and unwilling to pain Alice more than she could help, with a smothered burst of feeling she sprang away, out of the door, into the woods, where she would be unseen and unheard.

And there in the first burst of her agony, Ellen almost thought she should die. Her grief had not now indeed the goading sting of impatience; she knew the hand that gave the blow, and did not raise her own against it; she believed too what Alice had been saying, and the sense of it was, in a manner, present with her in her darkest time. But her spirit died within her; she bowed her head as if she were never to lift it up again; and she was ready to say with Job, "what good is my life to me?"

It was long, very long after, when slowly and mournfully she came in again to kiss Alice before going back to her aunt's. She would have done it hurriedly and turned away;

but Alice held her and looked sadly for a minute into the wo-begone little face, then clasped her close and kissed her again and again.

"Oh Alice," sobbed Ellen on her neck,—"aren't you mistaken? maybe you are mistaken?"

"I am not mistaken, my dear Ellie, my own Ellie," said Alice's clear sweet voice;—"not sorry, except for others. I will talk with you more about this. You will be sorry for me at first, and then, I hope, you will be glad. It is only that I am going home a little before you. Remember what I was saying to you a while ago. Will you tell Mr. Van Brunt I should like to see him for a few minutes some time when he has leisure?—And come to me early to-morrow, love."

Ellen could hardly get home. Her blinded eyes could not see where she was stepping; and again and again her fullness of heart got the better of everything else, and unmindful of the growing twilight she sat down on a stone by the wayside or flung herself on the ground to let sorrows have full sway. In one of these fits of bitter struggling with pain, there came on her mind, like a sunbeam across a cloud, the thought of Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus. It came with singular power. Did he love them so well? thought Ellen—and is he looking down upon us with the same tenderness even now?—She felt that the sun was shining still, though the cloud might be between; her broken heart crept to His feet and laid its burden there, and after a few minutes she rose up and went on her way, keeping that thought still close to her heart. The unspeakable tears that were shed during those few minutes were that softened out-pouring of the heart that leaves it eased. Very, very sorrowful as she was, she went on calmly now and stopped no more.

It was getting dark, and a little way from the gate, on the road, she met Mr. Van Brunt.

"Why I was beginning to get scared about you," said he. "I was coming to see where you was. How come you so late?"

Ellen made no answer, and as she now came nearer and he could see more distinctly, his tone changed.

"What's the matter?" said he,—"you ha'n't been well! what has happened? what ails you, Ellen?"

In astonishment, and then in alarm, he saw that she was unable to speak, and anxiously and kindly begged her to let him know what was the matter, and if he could do anything. Ellen shook her head.

"Aint Miss Alice well?" said he;—"you ha'n't heerd no bad news up there on the hill, have you?"

Ellen was not willing to answer this question with yea or nay. She recovered herself enough to give him Alice's message.

"I'll be sure and go," said he,—"but you ha'n't told me yet what's the matter! Has anything happened?"

"No," said Ellen;—"don't ask me—she'll tell you—don't ask me."

"I guess I'll go up the first thing in the morning then," said he,—"before breakfast."

"No," said Ellen,—"better not—perhaps she wouldn't be up so early."

"After breakfast then,—I'll go up right after breakfast. I was agoing with the boys up into that 'ere wheat lot, but anyhow I'll do that first. They won't have a chance to do much bad or good before I get back to them, I reckon."

As soon as possible she made her escape from Miss Fortune's eye and questions of curiosity which she could not bear to answer, and got to her own room. There the first thing she did was to find the eleventh chapter of John. She read it as she never had read it before,—she found in it what she had never found before; one of those cordials that none but the sorrowing drink. On the love of Christ, as there shown, little Ellen's heart fastened; and with that one sweetening thought amid all its deep sadness, her sleep that night might have been envied by many a luxurious roller in pleasure.

At Alice's wish she immediately took up her quarters at the parsonage, to leave her no more. But she could not see much difference in her from what she had been for several weeks past; and with the natural hopefulness of childhood, her mind presently almost refused to believe the extremity of the evil which had been threatened. Alice herself was

constantly cheerful, and sought by all means to further Ellen's cheerfulness; though careful at the same time, to forbid, as far she could, the rising of the hope she saw Ellen was inclined to cherish.

One evening they were sitting together at the window, looking out upon the same old lawn and distant landscape, now in all the fresh greenness of the young spring. The woods were not yet in full leaf; and the light of the setting sun upon the trees bordering the other side of the lawn showed them in the most exquisite and varied shades of color. Some had the tender green of the new leaf, some were in the red or yellow browns of the half-opened bud; others in various stages of forwardness mixing all the tints between, and the evergreens standing dark as ever, setting off the delicate hues of the surrounding foliage. This was all softened off in the distance; the very light of the spring was mild and tender compared with that of other seasons; and the air that stole round the corner of the house and came in at the open window was laden with aromatic fragrance. Alice and Ellen had been for some time silently breathing it and gazing thoughtfully on the loveliness that was abroad.

"I used to think," said Alice,—"that it must be a very hard thing to leave such a beautiful world. Did you ever think so, Ellie?"

"I don't know," said Ellen faintly,—"I don't remember."

"I used to think so," said Alice. "But I do not now, Ellie; my feeling has changed.—Do *you* feel so now, Ellie?"

"Oh why do you talk about it, dear Alice?"

"For many reasons, dear Ellie. Come here and sit in my lap again."

"I am afraid you cannot bear it."

"Yes I can. Sit here, and let your head rest where it used to;"—and Alice laid her cheek upon Ellen's forehead; —"you are a great comfort to me, dear Ellie."

"Oh Alice, don't say so—you'll kill me!" exclaimed Ellen in great distress.

"Why should I not say so, love?" said Alice soothingly. "I like to say it, and you will be glad to know it by-and-by. You are a *great* comfort to me."

"And what have you been to me!" said Ellen, weeping bitterly.

"What I cannot be much longer; and I want to accustom you to think of it, and to think of it rightly. I want you to know that if I am sorry at all in the thought, it is for the sake of others, not myself. Ellie, you yourself will be glad for me in a little while;—you will not wish me back."

Ellen shook her head.

"I know you will not—after a while;—and I shall leave you in good hands—I have arranged for that, my dear little sister!"

The sorrowing child neither knew nor cared what she meant, but a mute caress answered the *spirit* of Alice's words.

"Look up Ellie,—look out again. Lovely—lovely! all that is,—but I know heaven is a great deal more lovely. Feasted as our eyes are with beauty, I believe that eye has not seen, nor heart imagined the things that God has prepared for them that love him. *You* believe that, Ellie; you must not be so *very* sorry that I have gone to see it a little before you."

Ellen could say nothing.

"After all, Ellie, it is not beautiful things nor a beautiful world that make people happy—it is loving and being loved; and that is the reason why I am happy in the thought of heaven. I shall, if he receives me, I shall be with my Saviour; I shall see him and know him, without any of the clouds that come between here. I am often forgetting and displeasing him now,—never serving him well nor loving him right. I shall be glad to find myself where all that will be done with for ever. I shall be like him!—Why do you cry so, Ellie?" said Alice tenderly.

"I can't help it, Alice."

"It is only my love for you—and for two more—that could make me wish to stay here,—nothing else;—and I give all that up, because I do not know what is best for you or myself. And I look to meet you all again before long. Try to think of it as I do, Ellie."

"But what shall I do without you?" said poor Ellen.

"I will tell you Ellie. You must come here and take my place, and take care of those I leave behind; will you?—and they will take care of you."

"But,"—said Ellen looking up eagerly,—"aunt Fortune"—

"I have managed all that. Will you do it, Ellen? I shall feel easy and happy about you, and far easier and happier about my father, if I leave you established here, to be to him as far as you can, what I have been. Will you promise me, Ellie?"

In words it was not possible; but what silent kisses, and the close pressure of the arms round Alice's neck could say, was said.

"I am satisfied, then," said Alice presently. "My father will be your father—think him so, dear Ellie,—and I know John will take care of you. And my place will not be empty. I am very, very glad."

Ellen felt her place surely would be empty, but she could not say so.

"It was for this I was so glad of your aunt's marriage, Ellie," Alice soon went on. "I foresaw she might raise some difficulties in my way,—hard to remove perhaps;—but now I have seen Mr. Van Brunt, and he has promised me that nothing shall hinder your taking up your abode and making your home entirely here. Though I believe, Ellie, he would truly have loved to have you in his own house"

"I am sure he would," said Ellen,—"but oh how much rather"—

"He behaved very well about it the other morning,—in a very manly, frank, kind way,—showed a good deal of feeling I think, too. He gave me to understand that for his own sake he should be extremely sorry to let you go; but he assured me that nothing over which he had any control should stand in the way of your good."

"He is *very* kind—he is *very* good—he is always so," said Ellen. "I love Mr. Van Brunt very much. He always was as kind to me as he could be."

They were silent for a few minutes, and Alice was looking out of the window again. The sun had set, and the coloring of all without was graver. Yet it was but the change from one beauty to another. The sweet air seemed still sweeter than before the sun went down.

"You must be happy, dear Ellie, in knowing that I am. I am happy now. I enjoy all this, and I love you all,—but I can leave it and can leave you,—yes, both,—for I would see Jesus! He who has taught me to love him will not forsake

me now. Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. I thank him! O I thank him!"

Alice's face did not belie her words, though her eyes shone through tears.

"Ellie, dear,—you must love him with all your heart, and live constantly in his presence. I know if you do he will make you happy, in any event. He can always give more than he takes away. O how good he is!—and what wretched returns we make him!—I was miserable when John first went away to Doncaster; I did not know how to bear it. But now, Ellie, I think I can see it has done me good, and I can even be thankful for it. All things are ours—all things;—the world, and life, and death too."

"Alice," said Ellen, as well as she could,—"you know what you were saying to me the other day?"

"About what, love?"

"That about—you know,—that chapter"—

"About the death of Lazarus?"

"Yes. It has comforted me very much."

"So it has me, Ellie. It has been exceeding sweet to me at different times. Come sing to me,—'How firm a foundation.'"

From time to time Alice led to this kind of conversation, both for Ellen's sake and her own pleasure. Meanwhile she made her go on with all her usual studies and duties; and but for these talks Ellen would have scarce known how to believe that it could be true which she feared.

The wedding of Miss Fortune and Mr. Van Brunt was a very quiet one. It happened at far too busy a time of year, and they were too cool calculators, and looked upon their union in much too business-like a point of view, to dream of such a wild thing as a wedding-tour, or even resolve upon so troublesome a thing as a wedding-party. Miss Fortune would not have left her cheese and butter-making to see all the New Yorks and Bostons that ever were built; and she would have scorned a trip to Randolph. And Mr. Van Brunt would as certainly have wished himself all the while back among his furrows and crops. So one day they were quietly married at home, the Rev. Mr. Clark having been fetched from Thirlwall for the purpose. Mr. Van Brunt

would have preferred that Mr. Humphreys should perform the ceremony; but Miss Fortune was quite decided in favor of the Thirlwall gentleman, and of course he it was.

The talk ran high all over the country on the subject of this marriage, and opinions were greatly divided; some congratulating Mr. Van Brunt on having made himself one of the richest land-holders "in town" by the junction of another fat farm to his own; some pitying him for having got more than his match within doors, and "guessing he'd missed his reckoning for once."

"If he has, then," said Sam Larkens, who heard some of these condoling remarks,—"it's the first time in his life, I can tell you. If *she* aint a little mistaken, I wish I mayn't get a month's wages in a year to come. I tell you, you don't know Van Brunt; he's as easy as anybody as long as he don't care about what you're doing; but if he once takes a notion you can't make him gee nor haw no more than you can our near ox Timothy when he's out o' yoke; and he's as ugly a beast to manage as ever I see when he aint yoked up. Why bless you! there ha'n't been a thing done on the farm this five year but just what he liked—*she* don't know it. I've heerd her," said Sam chuckling,—"I've heerd her atelling him how she wanted this thing done, and t'other, and he'd just not say a word and go and do it right t'other way. It'll be a wonder if somebody aint considerably startled in her calculations afore summer's out."

CHAPTER XLII.

"She enjoys sure peace for evermore,
As weather-beaten ship arrived on happy shore."
SPENSER.

It was impossible at first to make Mr. Humphreys believe that Alice was right in her notion about her health. The greatness of the evil was such that his mind refused to receive it, much as Ellen's had done. His unbelief however lasted longer than hers. Constantly with Alice as she was, and talking to her on the subject, Ellen slowly gave up the hope she had clung to; though still, bending all her energies to the present pleasure and comfort of her adopted sister, her mind shrank from looking at the end. Daily and hourly, in every way, she strove to be what Alice said she was, a comfort to her, and she succeeded. Daily and hourly Alice's look and smile and manner said the same thing over and over. It was Ellen's precious reward, and in seeking to earn it she half the time earned another in forgetting herself. It was different with Mr. Humphreys. He saw much less of his daughter; and when he was with her, it was impossible for Alice, with all her efforts, to speak to him as freely and plainly as she was in the habit of speaking to Ellen. The consequences were such as grieved her, but could not be helped.

As soon as it was known that her health was failing, Sophia Marshman came and took up her abode at the parsonage. Ellen was almost sorry; it broke up in a measure the sweet and peaceful way of life she and Alice had held together ever since her own coming. Miss Sophia could not make a third in their conversations. But as Alice's strength grew less and she needed more attendance and help, it was plain her friend's being there was a happy thing for both Alice and Ellen. Miss Sophia was active, cheerful, untiring in her affectionate care, always pleasant in manner and temper; a very useful person

in a house where one was ailing. Mrs. Vawse was often there too, and to her Ellen clung, whenever she came, as to a pillar of strength. Miss Sophia could do nothing to help *her;* Mrs. Vawse could, a great deal.

Alice had refused to write or allow others to write to her brother. She said he was just finishing his course of study at Doncaster; she would not have him disturbed or broken off by bad news from home. In August he would be quite through; the first of August he would be home.

Before the middle of June, however, her health began to fail much more rapidly than she had counted upon. It became too likely that if she waited for his regular return at the first of August she would see but little of her brother. She at last reluctantly consented that Mrs. Chauncey should write to him; and from that moment counted the days.

Her father had scarcely till now given up his old confidence respecting her. He came into her room one morning when just about to set out for Carra-carra to visit one or two of his poor parishioners.

"How are you to-day, my daughter?" he asked tenderly.

"Easy, papa,—and happy," said Alice.

"You are looking better," said he. "We shall have you well again among us yet."

There was some sorrow for him in Alice's smile, as she looked up at him and answered, "Yes, papa,—in the land where the inhabitant shall no more say 'I am sick.'"

He kissed her hastily and went out.

"I almost wish I was in your place, Alice," said Miss Sophia. "I hope I may be half as happy when my time comes."

"What right have you to hope so, Sophia?" said Alice, rather sadly.

"To be sure," said the other, after a pause, "you have been ten times as good as I. I don't wonder you feel easy when you look back and think how blameless your life has been."

"Sophia, Sophia!" said Alice,—"you know it is not that. I never did a good thing in my life that was not mixed and spoiled with evil. I never came up to the full measure of duty in any matter."

"But surely," said Miss Sophia,—"if one does the best one can, it will be accepted?"

"It won't do to trust to that, Sophia. God's law requires perfection; and nothing less than perfection will be received as payment of its demand. If you owe a hundred dollars, and your creditor will not hold you quit for anything less than the whole sum, it is of no manner of signification whether you offer him ten or twenty."

"Why according to that," said Miss Sophia, "it makes no difference what kind of life one leads."

Alice sighed and shook her head.

"The fruit shows what the tree is. Love to God *will* strive to please him—always."

"And is it of no use to strive to please him?"

"Of no manner of use, if you make that your *trust*."

"Well I don't see what one *is* to trust to," said Miss Sophia,—"if it isn't a good life."

"I will answer you," said Alice, with a smile in which there was no sorrow,—"in some words that I love very much, of an old Scotchman, I think;—'I have taken all my good deeds and all my bad, and have cast them together in a heap before the Lord; and from them all I have fled to Jesus Christ, and in him alone I have sweet peace.'"

Sophia was silenced for a minute by her look.

"Well," said she, "I don't understand it; that is what George is always talking about; but I can't understand him."

"I am *very* sorry you cannot," said Alice gravely.

They were both silent for a little while.

"If all Christians were like you," said Miss Sophia, "I might think more about it; but they are such a dull set; there seems to be no life nor pleasure among them."

Alice thought of the lines,—

> Their pleasures rise to things unseen,
> Beyond the bounds of time;
> Where neither eyes nor ears have been,
> Nor thoughts of mortals climb.

"You judge," said she, "like the rest of the world, of that which they see not. After all, *they* know best whether they are happy. What do you think of Mrs. Vawse?"

"I don't know what to think of her; she is wonderful

to me; she is past my comprehension entirely. Don't make *her* an example."

"No, religion has done that for me. What do you think of your brother?"

"George?—*He* is happy,—there is no doubt of that; he is the happiest person in the family, by all odds; but then—I think he has a natural knack at being happy;—it is impossible for anything to put him out."

Alice smiled and shook her head again.

"Sophistry, Sophia. What do you think of *me*?"

"I don't see what reason you have to be anything but happy."

"What have I to make me so?"

Sophia was silent. Alice laid her thin hand upon hers.

"I am leaving all I love in this world. Should I be happy if I were not going to somewhat I love better? Should I be happy if I had no secure prospect of meeting with them again?—or if I were doubtful of my reception in that place whither I hope to go?"

Sophia burst into tears. "Well I don't know," said she; "I suppose you are right; but I don't understand it."

Alice drew her face down to hers and whispered something in her ear.

Undoubtedly Alice had much around as well as within her to make a declining life happy. Mrs. Vawse and Miss Marshman were two friends and nurses not to be surpassed, in their different ways. Margery's motherly affection, her zeal, and her skill, left nothing for heart to wish in her line of duty. And all that affection, taste, and kindness, with abundant means, could supply was at Alice's command. Still her greatest comfort was Ellen. Her constant thoughtful care; the thousand tender attentions, from the roses daily gathered for her table to the chapters she read and the hymns she sung to her; the smile that often covered a pang; the pleasant words and tone that many a time came from a sinking heart; they were Alice's daily and nightly cordial. Ellen had learned self-command in more than one school; affection, as once before, was her powerful teacher now, and taught her well. Sophia openly confessed that Ellen was the best nurse; and Margery when nobody heard her, muttered blessings on the child's head.

Mr. Humphreys came in often to see his daughter, but never stayed long. It was plain he could not bear it. It might have been difficult too for Alice to bear, but she wished for her brother. She reckoned the time from Mrs. Chauncey's letter to that when he might be looked for; but some irregularities in the course of the Post Office made it impossible to count with certainty upon the exact time of his arrival. Meanwhile her failure was very rapid. Mrs. Vawse began to fear he would not arrive in time.

The weeks of June ran out; the roses, all but a few late kinds, blossomed and died; July came.

One morning when Ellen went into her room, Alice drew her close to her and said, "You remember, Ellie, in the Pilgrim's Progress, when Christiana and her companions were sent for to go over the river?—I think the messenger has come for me. You must'n't cry, love;—listen—this is the token he seems to bring me,—'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' I am sure of it Ellie; I have no doubt of it;—so don't cry for me. You have been my dear comfort, my blessing—we shall love each other in heaven, Ellie."

Alice kissed her earnestly several times, and then Ellen escaped from her arms and fled away. It was long before she could come back again. But she came at last; and went on through all that day as she had done for weeks before. The day seemed long, for every member of the family was on the watch for John's arrival, and it was thought his sister would not live to see another. It wore away; hour after hour passed without his coming; and the night fell. Alice showed no impatience, but she evidently wished and watched for him; and Ellen, whose affection read her face and knew what to make of the look at the opening door,—the eye turned toward the window,—the attitude of listening,—grew feverish with her intense desire that she should be gratified.

From motives of convenience, Alice had moved up stairs to a room that John generally occupied when he was at home; directly over the sitting-room, and with pleasant windows toward the East. Mrs. Chauncey, Miss Sophia, and Mrs. Vawse, were all there. Alice was lying quietly on the bed, and seemed to be dozing; but Ellen noticed, after lights were brought, that every now and then she opened her eyes and gave an inquiring look round the room. Ellen

could not bear it; slipping softly out she went down stairs and seated herself on the threshold of the glass door, as if by watching there she could be any nearer the knowledge of what she wished for.

It was a perfectly still summer night. The moon shone brightly on the little lawn and poured its rays over Ellen, just as it had done one well-remembered evening near a year ago. Ellen's thoughts went back to it. How like and how unlike! All around was just the same as it had been then; the cool moonlight upon the distant fields, the trees in the gap lit up, as then, the lawn a flood of brightness. But there was no happy party gathered there now;—they were scattered. One was away; one a sorrowful watcher alone in the moonlight;—one waiting to be gone where there is no need of moon or stars for evermore. Ellen almost wondered they could shine so bright upon those that had no heart to rejoice in them; she thought they looked down coldly and unfeelingly upon her distress. She remembered the whip-poor-will; none was heard to-night, near or far; she was glad of it; it would have been too much;—and there were no fluttering leaves; the air was absolutely still. Ellen looked up again at the moon and stars. They shone calmly on, despite the reproaches she cast upon them; and as she still gazed up towards them in their purity and steadfastness, other thoughts began to come into her head of that which was more pure still, and more steadfast. How long they have been shining, thought Ellen;—going on just the same from night to night and from year to year,—as if they never would come to an end. But they *will* come to an end—the time *will* come when they will stop shining—bright as they are; and then, when all they are swept away, then heaven will be only begun; that will never end!—never. And in a few years we who were so happy a year ago and are so sorry now, shall be all glad together there,—this will be all over! And then as she looked, and the tears sprang to her thoughts, a favorite hymn of Alice's came to her remembrance.

Ye stars are but the shining dust
Of my divine abode;
The pavements of those heavenly courts
Where I shall see my God.

The Father of eternal lights
Shall there his beams display;
And not one moment's darkness mix
With that unvaried day.

"Not one moment's darkness!" "Oh," thought litttle Ellen,—"there are a great many here!"—Still gazing up at the bright calm heavens, while the tears ran fast down her face, and fell into her lap, there came trooping through Ellen's mind many of those words she had been in the habit of reading to her mother and Alice, and which she knew and loved so well.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

While Ellen was yet going over and over these precious things, with a strong sense of their preciousness in all her throbbing grief, there came to her ear through the perfect stillness of the night the faint, far-off, not-to-be-mistaken, sound of quick-coming horse's feet,—nearer and nearer every second. It came with a mingled pang of pain and pleasure, both very acute; she rose instantly to her feet, and stood pressing her hand to her heart while the quick measured beat of hoofs grew louder and louder, until it ceased at the very door. The minutes were few; but they were moments of intense bitterness. The tired horse stooped his head, as the rider flung himself from the saddle and came to the door where Ellen stood fixed. A look asked, and a look answered, the question that lips could not speak. Ellen only pointed the way and uttered the words, "up stairs;" and John rushed thither. He checked himself however at the door of the room, and opened it and went in as calmly as if he had but come from a walk. But his caution was very needless.

Alice knew his step, she knew *his horse's step*, too well; she had raised herself up and stretched out both arms towards him before he entered. In another moment they were round his neck, and she was supported in his. There was a long, long silence.

"Are you happy, Alice?" whispered her brother.

"Perfectly. This was all I wanted. Kiss me, dear John."

As he did so, again and again, she felt his tears on her cheek, and put up her hand to his face to wipe them away; kissed him then, and then once again laid her head on his breast. They remained so a little while without stirring; except that some whispers were exchanged too low for others to hear, and once more she raised her face to kiss him. A few minutes after those who could look saw his color change; he felt the arms unclasp their hold; and as he laid her gently back on the pillow they fell languidly down; the will and the power that had sustained them were gone. *Alice* was gone; but the departing spirit had left a ray of brightness on its earthly house; there was a half smile on the sweet face, of most entire peace and satisfaction. Her brother looked for a moment,—closed the eyes,—kissed, once and again, the sweet lips,—and left the room.

Ellen saw him no more that night, nor knew how he passed it. For her, wearied with grief and excitement, it was spent in long heavy slumber. From the pitch to which her spirits had been wrought by care, sorrow, and self-restraint, they now suddenly and completely sank down; naturally, and happily, she lost all sense of trouble in sleep.

When sleep at last left her, and she stole down stairs into the sitting-room in the morning, it was rather early. Nobody was stirring about the house but herself. It seemed deserted; the old sitting-room looked empty and forlorn; the stillness was oppressive. Ellen could not bear it. Softly opening the glass door she went out upon the lawn where everything was sparkling in the early freshness of the summer morning. How could it look so pleasant without, when all pleasantness was gone within?—It pressed upon Ellen's heart. With a restless feeling of pain, she went on, round the corner of the house, and paced slowly along the road till she came to the foot-path that led up to the place on the mountain John had called the Bridge of the Nose. Ellen took that

path, often traveled and much loved by her; and slowly, and with slow-dripping tears, made her way up over moss wet with the dew, and the stones and rocks with which the rough way was strewn. She passed the place where Alice had first found her,—she remembered it well;—there was the very stone beside which they had kneeled together, and where Alice's folded hands were laid. Ellen knelt down beside it again, and for a moment laid her cheek to the cold stone while her arms embraced it, and a second time it was watered with tears. She rose up again quickly and went on her way, toiling up the steep path beyond, till she turned the edge of the mountain and stood on the old place where she and Alice that evening had watched the setting sun. Many a setting sun they had watched from thence; it had been a favorite pleasure of them both to run up there for a few minutes before or after tea and see the sun go down at the far end of the long valley. It seemed to Ellen one of Alice's haunts; she missed her there; and the thought went keenly home that there she would come with her no more. She sat down on the stone she called her own, and leaning her head on Alice's which was close by, she wept bitterly. Yet not very long; she was too tired and subdued for bitter weeping; she raised her head again, and wiping away her tears looked abroad over the beautiful landscape. Never more beautiful than then.

The early sun filled the valley with patches of light and shade. The sides and tops of the hills looking towards the east were bright with the cool brightness of the morning; beyond and between them deep shadows lay. The sun could not yet look at that side of the mountain where Ellen sat, nor at the long reach of ground it screened from his view, stretching from the mountain foot to the other end of the valley; but to the left, between that and the Cat's back, the rays of the sun streamed through, touching the houses of the village, showing the lake, and making every tree and barn and clump of wood in the distance stand out in bright relief. Deliciously cool, both the air and the light, though a warm day was promised. The night had wept away all the heat of yesterday. Now, the air was fresh with the dew and sweet from hayfield and meadow; and the birds were singing like mad all around. There was no answering echo in the little

human heart that looked and listened. Ellen loved all these things too well not to notice them even now; she felt their full beauty; but she felt it sadly. "*She* will look at it no more!" she said to herself. But instantly came an answer to her thought;—"Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

"She is there now," thought Ellen,—"she is happy,—why should I be sorry for her? I am not; but oh! I must be sorry for myself—Oh Alice!—dear Alice!"

She wept; but then again came sweeping over her mind the words with which she was so familiar,—"the days of thy mourning shall be ended;" and again with her regret mingled the consciousness that it must be for herself alone. And for herself,—"Can I not trust Him whom she trusted?" she thought. Somewhat soothed and more calm, she sat still looking down into the brightening valley or off to the hills that stretched away on either hand of it; when up through the still air the sound of the little Carra-carra church bell came to her ear. It rang for a minute and then stopped.

It crossed Ellen's mind to wonder what it could be ringing for at that time of day; but she went back to her musings and had entirely forgotten it, when again, clear and full through the stillness the sound came pealing up.

"One—two!"

Ellen knew now! It went through her very heart.

It is the custom in the country to toll the church bell upon occasion of the death of any one in the township or parish. A few strokes are rung by way of drawing attention; these are followed after a little pause by a single one if the knell is for a man, or two for a woman. Then another short pause. Then follows the number of the years the person has lived, told in short, rather slow strokes, as one would count them up. After pausing once more the tolling begins, and is kept up for some time; the strokes following in slow and sad succession, each one being permitted to die quite away before another breaks upon the ear.

Ellen had been told of this custom, but habit had never made it familiar. Only once she had happened to hear this

notice of death given out; and that was long ago; the bell could not be heard at Miss Fortune's house. It came upon her now with all the force of novelty and surprise. As the number of the years of Alice's life was sadly told out, every stroke was to her as if it fell upon a raw nerve. Ellen hid her face in her lap and tried to keep from counting, but she could not; and as the tremulous sound of the last of the twenty-four died away upon the air, she was shuddering from head to foot. A burst of tears relieved her when the sound ceased.

Just then a voice close beside her said low, as if the speaker might not trust its higher tones,—"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help!"

How differently *that* sound struck upon Ellen's ear! With an indescribable air of mingled tenderness, weariness, and sorrow, she slowly rose from her seat and put both her arms round the speaker's neck. Neither said a word; but to Ellen the arm that held her was more than all words; it was the dividing line between her and the world,—on this side everything, on that side nothing.

No word was spoken for many minutes.

"My dear Ellen," said her brother softly,—"how came you here?"

"I don't know," whispered Ellen,—"there was nobody there—I couldn't stay in the house."

"Shall we go home now?"

"O yes—whenever you please.

But neither moved yet. Ellen had raised her head; she still stood with her arm upon her brother's shoulder; the eyes of both were on the scene before them; the thoughts of neither. He presently spoke again.

"Let us try to love our God better, Ellie, the less we have left to love in this world;—that is his meaning—let sorrow but bring us closer to him. Dear Alice is well—she is well,—and if *we* are made to suffer, we know and we love the hand that has done it,—do we not Ellie?"

Ellen put her hands to her face; she thought her heart would break. He gently drew her to a seat on the stone beside him, and still keeping his arm round her, slowly and soothingly went on—

"Think that she is happy;—think that she is safe;—think

that she is with that blessed One whose face we seek at a distance,—satisfied with his likeness instead of wearily struggling with sin;—think that sweetly and easily she has got home; and it is our home too. We must weep, because we are left alone; but for her—'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord!'"

As he spoke in low and sweet tones, Ellen's tears calmed and stopped; but she still kept her hands to her face.

"Shall we go home, Ellie?" said her brother after another silence. She rose up instantly and said yes. But he held her still, and looking for a moment at the tokens of watching and grief and care in her countenance, he gently kissed the pale little face, adding a word of endearment which almost broke Ellen's heart again. Then taking her hand they went down the mountain together.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"I have seen angels by the sick one's pillow;
Theirs was the soft tone and the soundless tread,
Where smitten hearts were drooping like the willow,
They stood 'between the living and the dead.'"

UNKNOWN.

THE whole Marshman family arrived to-day from Ventnor; some to see Alice's loved remains, and all to follow them to the grave. The parsonage could not hold so many; the two Mr. Marshman's therefore, with Major and Mrs. Gillespie, made their quarters at Thirlwall. Margery's hands were full enough with those that were left.

In the afternoon however she found time for a visit to the room, *the* room. She was standing at the foot of the bed, gazing on the sweet face she loved so dearly, when Mrs. Chauncey and Mrs. Vawse came up for the same purpose. All three stood some time in silence.

The bed was strewn with flowers, somewhat singularly disposed. Upon the pillow, and upon and about the hands which were folded on the breast, were scattered some of the rich late roses,—roses and rose-buds, strewn with beautiful and profuse carelessness. A single stem of white lilies lay on the side of the bed; the rest of the flowers, a large quantity, covered the feet, seeming to have been flung there without any attempt at arrangement. They were of various kinds, chosen however with exquisite taste and feeling. Beside the roses, there were none that were not either white or distinguished for their fragrance. The delicate white verbearer, the pure feverfew, mignonette, sweet geranium, white myrtle, the rich-scented heliotrope, were mingled with the late-blossoming damask and purple roses; no yellow flowers, no purple, except those mentioned; even the flaunting petunia, though white, had been left out by the nice hand that had culled them. But

the arranging of these beauties seemed to have been little more than attempted; though indeed it might be questioned whether the finest art could have bettered the effect of what the over-tasked hand of affection had left half done. Mrs. Chauncey however after a while began slowly to take a flower or two from the foot and place them on other parts of the bed.

"Will Mrs. Chauncey pardon my being so bold," said Margery then, who had looked on with no pleasure while this was doing,—"but if she had seen when those flowers were put there,—it wouldn't be her wish, I am sure it wouldn't be her wish, to stir one of them."

Mrs. Chauncey's hand, which was stretched out for a fourth, drew back.

"Why who put them here?" she asked.

"Miss Ellen, ma'am.

"Where is Ellen?"

"I think she is sleeping, ma'am. Poor child! she's the most wearied of us all with sorrow and watching," said Margery weeping.

"You saw her bring them up, did you?"

"I saw her, ma'am. O will I ever forget it as long as I live!"

"Why?" said Mrs. Chauncey gently.

"It's a thing one should have seen, ma'am, to understand. I don't know as I can tell it well."

Seeing however that Mrs. Chauncey still looked her wish, Margery went on, half under her breath.

"Why ma'am, the way it was,—I had come up to get some linen out of the closet, for I had watched my time; Mrs. Chauncey sees, I was afeard of finding Mr. John here, and I knew he was lying down just then, so —"

"Lying down, was he?" said Mrs. Vawse. "I did not know he had taken any rest to-day.',

"It was very little he took, ma'am, indeed, though there was need enough I am sure;—he had been up with his father the live-long blessed night. And then the first thing this morning he was away after Miss Ellen, poor child! wherever she had betaken herself to; I happened to see her before anybody was out, going round the corner of the house, and so I knew when he asked me for her."

"Was she going after flowers *then?*" said Mrs. Chauncey.

"O no, ma'am,—it was a long time after; it was this morning some time.—I had come up to the linen closet, knowing Mr. John was in his room, and I thought I was safe; and I had just taken two or three pieces on my arm, you know, ma'am, when somehow I forgot myself, and forgot what I had come for, and leaving what I should ha' been a doing, I was standing there, looking out this way at the dear features I never thought to see in death—and I had entirely forgotten what I was there for, ma'am,—when I heard Miss Ellen's little footstep coming softly up stairs. I didn't want her to catch sight of me just then, so I had just drew myself back a bit, so as I could see her without her seeing me back in the closet where I was. But it had like to have got the better of me entirely, ma'am, when I see her come in with a lap full of them flowers, and looking so as she did too! but with much trouble I kept quiet. She went up and stood by the side of the bed, just where Mrs. Chauncey is standing, with her sweet sad little face,—it's the hardest thing to see a child's face to look so,—and the flowers all gathered up in her frock. It was odd to see her, she didn't cry,—not at all,—only once I see her brow wrinkle, but it seemed as if she had a mind not to, for she put her hand up to her face and held it a little, and then she began to take out the flowers one by one, and she'd lay a rose here and a rose-bud there, and so; and then she went round to the other side and laid the lilies, and two or three more roses there on the pillow. But I could see all the while it was getting too much for her; I see very soon she wouldn't get through; she just placed two or three more, and one rose there in that hand, and that was the last. I could see it working in her face; she turned as pale as her lilies all at once, and just tossed up all the flowers out of her frock on to the bed-foot there,—that's just as they fell,—and down she went on her knees, and her face in her hands on the side of the bed. I thought no more about my linen," said Margery weeping,—"I couldn't do anything but look at that child kneeling there, and her flowers,—and all beside her she used to call her sister, and that couldn't be a sister to her no more; and she's without a sister now to be sure, poor child!"

"She has a brother, unless I am mistaken," said Mrs. Chauncey, when she could speak.

"And that's just what I was going to tell you, ma'am. She had been there five or ten minutes without moving, or more—I am sure I don't know how long it was, I didn't think how time went,—when the first thing I knew I heard another step, and Mr. John came in. I thought, and expected, he was taking some sleep; but I suppose," said Margery sighing, "he couldn't rest. I knew his step and just drew myself back further. He came just where you are, ma'am, and stood with his arms folded a long time looking. I don't know how Miss Ellen didn't hear him come in; but however she didn't;—and they were both as still as death, one on one side, and the other on the other side. And I wondered he didn't see her; but her white dress and all—and I suppose he had no thought but for one thing. I knew the first minute he did see her, when he looked over and spied her on the other side of the bed;—I see his color change; and then his mouth took the look it always did whenever he sets himself to do anything. He stood a minute, and then he went round, and knelt down beside of her, and softly took away one of her hands from under her face, and held it in both of his own, and then he made such a prayer!—Oh," said Margery, her tears falling fast at the recollection,—"I never heard the like! I never did. He gave thanks for Miss Alice, and he had reason enough to be sure,—and for himself and Miss Ellen—I wondered to hear him!—and he prayed for them too, and others,—and—oh I thought I couldn't stand and hear him; and I was afeard to breathe the whole time, lest he would know I was there. It was the beautifullest prayer I did ever hear, or ever shall, however."

"And how did Ellen behave?" said Mrs. Chauncey when she could speak.

"She didn't stir, nor make the least motion nor sound, till he had done, and spoke to her. They stood a little while then, and Mr. John put the rest of the flowers up there round her hands and the pillow,—Miss Ellen hadn't put more than half a dozen;—I noticed how he kept hold of Miss Ellen's hand all the time. I heard her begin to tell him how she didn't finish the flowers, and he told her, 'I saw it all, Ellie,' he said; and he said 'it didn't want finishing.' I wondered

how he should see it, but I suppose he did, however. *I* understood it very well. They went away down stairs after that."

"He is beautifully changed," said Mrs. Vawse.

"I don't know, ma'am," said Margery,—"I've heard that said afore, but I can't say as I ever could see it. He always was the same to me—always the honorablest, truest, noblest —my husband says he was a bit fiery, but I never could tell that the one temper was sweeter than the other; only everybody always did whatever Mr. John wanted, to be sure; but he was the perfectest gentleman, always."

"I have not seen either Mr. John or Ellen since my mother came," said Mrs. Chauncey.

"No, ma'am," said Margery,—"they were out reading under the trees for a long time; and Miss Ellen came in the kitchen-way a little while ago and went to lie down."

"How is Mr. Humphreys?"

"O I can't tell you, ma'am,—he is worse than any one knows of I am afraid, unless Mr. John; you will not see him, ma'am; he has not been here once, nor don't mean to, I think. It will go hard with my poor master, I am afraid," said Margery weeping;—"dear Miss Alice said Miss Ellen was to take her place; but it would want an angel to do that."

"Ellen will do a great deal," said Mrs. Vawse;—"Mr. Humphreys loves her well now, I know."

"So do I, ma'am, I am sure; and so does every one; but still—"

Margery broke off her sentence and sorrowfully went down stairs. Mrs. Chauncey moved no more flowers.

Late in the afternoon of the next day Margery came softly into Ellen's room.

"Miss Ellen, dear, you are awake, aren't you?"

"Yes, Margery," said Ellen, sitting up on the bed;—"come in. What is it?"

"I came to ask Miss Ellen if she *could* do me a great favor; —there's a strange gentleman come, and nobody has seen him yet, and it don't seem right. He has been here this some time."

"Have you told Mr. John?"

"No, Miss Ellen; he's in the library with my master; and

somehow I durstn't go to the door; mayhap they wouldn't be best pleased. *Would* Miss Ellen mind telling Mr. John of the gentleman's being here?"

Ellen would mind it very much, there was no doubt of that; Margery could hardly have asked her to put a greater force upon herself; she did not say so.

"You are sure he is there, Margery?"

"I am quite sure, Miss Ellen. I am very sorry to disturb you; but if you wouldn't mind—I am ashamed to have the gentleman left to himself so long."

"I'll do it, Margery."

She got up, slipped on her shoes, and mechanically smoothing her hair, set off to the library. On the way she almost repented her willingness to oblige Margery; the errand was marvelous disagreeable to her. She had never gone to that room except with Alice; never entered it uninvited. She could hardly make up her mind to knock at the door. But she had promised; it must be done.

The first fearful tap was too light to arouse any mortal ears. At the second, though not much better, she heard some one move, and John opened the door. Without waiting to hear her speak he immediately drew her in, very unwillingly on her part, and led her silently up to his father. The old gentleman was sitting in his great study-chair with a book open at his side. He turned from it as she came up, took her hand in his, and held it for a few moments without speaking. Ellen dared not raise her eyes.

"My little girl," said he very gravely, though not without a tone of kindness too,—"are you coming here to cheer my loneliness?"

Ellen in vain struggled to speak an articulate word; it was impossible; she suddenly stooped down and touched her lips to the hand that lay on the arm of the chair. He put the hand tenderly upon her head.

"God bless you," said he, "abundantly, for all the love you showed *her*. Come,—if you will,—and be, as far as a withered heart will let you, all that she wished. All is yours—except what will be buried with her."

Ellen was awed and pained, very much. Not because the words and manner were sad and solemn; it was the *tone* that distressed her. There was no tearfulness in it; it

trembled a little; it seemed to come indeed from a withered heart. She shook with the effort she made to control herself. John asked her presently what she had come for.

"A gentleman," said Ellen,—"there's a gentleman—a stranger"—

He went immediately out to see him, leaving her standing there. Ellen did not know whether to go too or stay; she thought from his not taking her with him he wished her to stay; she stood doubtfully. Presently she heard steps coming back along the hall—steps of two persons—the door opened, and the strange gentleman came in. No stranger to Ellen! she knew him in a moment; it was her old friend, her friend of the boat,—Mr. George Marshman.

Mr. Humphreys rose up to meet him, and the two gentlemen shook hands in silence. Ellen had at first shrunk out of the way to the other side of the room, and now when she saw an opportunity she was going to make her escape; but John gently detained her; and she stood still by his side, though with a kind of feeling that it was not there the best place or time for her old friend to recognize her. He was sitting by Mr. Humphreys and for the present quite occupied with him. Ellen thought nothing of what they were saying; with eyes eagerly fixed upon Mr. Marshman she was reading memory's long story over again. The same pleasant look and kind tone that she remembered so well came to comfort her in her first sorrow,—the old way of speaking, and even of moving an arm or hand, the familiar figure and face; how they took Ellen's thoughts back to the deck of the steamboat, the hymns, the talks; the love and kindness that led and persuaded her so faithfully and effectually to do her duty;—it was all present again; and Ellen gazed at him as at a picture of the past, forgetting for the moment everything else. The same love and kindness were endeavoring now to say something for Mr. Humphreys' relief; it was a hard task. The old gentleman heard and answered, for the most part briefly, but so as to show that his friend labored in vain; the bitterness and hardness of grief were unallayed yet. It was not till John made some slight remark that Mr. Marshman turned his head that way; he looked for a moment in some surprise, and then said, his countenance lightening, "Is that Ellen Montgomery?"

Ellen sprang across at that word to take his out-stretched hand. But as she felt the well remembered grasp of it, and met the old look the thought of which she had treasured up for years,—it was too much. Back as in a flood to her heart, seemed to come at once all the thoughts and feelings of the time since then;—the difference of this meeting from the joyful one she had so often pictured to herself; the sorrow of that time mixed with the sorrow now; and the sense that the very hand that had wiped those first tears away was the one now laid in the dust by death. All thronged on her heart at once; and it was too much. She had scarce touched Mr. Marshman's hand when she hastily withdrew her own, and gave way to an overwhelming burst of sorrow. It was infectious. There was such an utter absence of all bitterness or hardness in the tone of this grief; there was so touching an expression of submission mingled with it, that even Mr. Humphreys was overcome. Ellen was not the only subdued weeper there; not the only one whose tears came from a broken-up heart. For a few minutes the silence of stifled sobs was in the room, till Ellen recovered enough to make her escape; and then the color of sorrow was lightened, in one breast at least.

"Brother," said Mr. Humphreys,—"I can hear you now better than I could a little while ago. I had almost forgotten that God is good. 'Light in the darkness;'—I see it now. That child has given me a lesson."

Ellen did not know what had passed around her, nor what had followed her quitting the room. But she thought when John came to the tea-table he looked relieved. If his general kindness and tenderness of manner toward herself *could* have been greater than usual, she might have thought it was that night; but she only thought he felt better.

Mr. Marshman was not permitted to leave the house. He was a great comfort to everybody. Not himself overburdened with sorrow, he was able to make that effort for the good of the rest which no one yet had been equal to. The whole family, except Mr. Humphreys, were gathered together at this time; and his grave cheerful unceasing kindness made that by far the most comfortable meal that had been taken. It was exceeding grateful to Ellen to see and hear him, from the old remembrance as well as the present

effect. And he had not forgotten his old kindness for her; she saw it in his look, his words, his voice, shown in every way; and the feeling that she had got her old friend again and should never lose him now gave her more deep pleasure than anything else could possibly have done at that time. His own family too had not seen him in a long time, so his presence was matter of general satisfaction.

Later in the evening Ellen was sitting beside him on the sofa, looking and listening,—he was like a piece of old music to her,—when John came to the back of the sofa and said he wanted to speak to her. She went with him to the other side of the room.

"Ellie," said he in in low voice, "I think my father would like to hear you sing a hymn,—do you think you could?"

Ellen looked up, with a peculiar mixture of uncertainty and resolution in her countenance, and said yes.

"Not if it will pain you too much,—and not unless you think you can surely go through with it, Ellen," he said gently.

"No," said Ellen;—"I will try."

"Will it not give you too much pain? do you think you can?"

"No—I will try," she repeated.

As she went along the hall she said and resolved to herself that she *would* do it. The library was dark; coming from the light Ellen at first could see nothing. John placed her in a chair, and went away himself to a little distance where he remained perfectly still. She covered her face with her hands for a minute, and prayed for strength; she was afraid to try.

Alice and her brother were remarkable for beauty of voice and utterance. The latter Ellen had in part caught from them; in the former she thought herself greatly inferior. Perhaps she underrated herself; her voice, though not indeed powerful, was low and sweet and very clear; and the entire simplicity and feeling with which she sang hymns was more effectual than any higher qualities of tone and compass. She had been very much accustomed to sing with Alice, who excelled in beautiful truth and simplicity of expression; listening with delight, as she had often done, and often joining with her, Ellen had caught something of her manner.

She thought nothing of all this now; she had a trying task to go through. Sing!—then, and there!—And what should she sing? All that class of hymns that bore directly on the subject of their sorrow must be left on one side; she hardly dared think of them. Instinctively she took up another class, that without baring the wound would lay the balm close to it. A few minutes of deep stillness were in the dark room; then very low, and in tones that trembled a little, rose the words,

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

The tremble in her voice ceased, as she went on.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

By him my prayers acceptance gain,
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought,—
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim
With every lab'ring breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

Ellen paused a minute. There was not a sound to be heard in the room. She thought of the hymn, "Loving Kindness;" but the tune, and the spirit of the words, was too lively. Her mother's favorite, "'Tis my happiness below," but Ellen could not venture that; she strove to forget it as fast as possible. She sang, clearly and sweetly as ever now,

Hark my soul, it is the Lord,
'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word;—
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?

"I delivered thee when bound,
And when bleeding healed thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turned thy darkness into light.

"Can a mother's tender care
Cease toward the child she bare?
Yea—*she* may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love;
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of life is done,
Partner of my throne shalt be,—
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee and adore,—
Oh for grace to love thee more!

Ellen's task was no longer painful, but most delightful. She hoped she was doing some good; and that hope enabled her, after the first trembling beginning, to go on without any difficulty. She was not thinking of herself. It was very well she could not see the effect upon her auditors. Through the dark her eyes could only just discern a dark figure stretched upon the sofa and another standing by the mantlepiece. The room was profoundly still, except when she was singing. The choice of hymns gave her the greatest trouble. She thought of "Jerusalem, my happy home," but it would not do; she and Alice had too often sung it in strains of joy. Happily came to her mind the beautiful,

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord," &c.

She went through all the seven long verses. Still when Ellen paused at the end of this, the breathless silence seemed to invite her to go on. She waited a minute to gather breath. The blessed words had gone down into her very heart; did they ever seem half so sweet before? She was cheered and strengthened, and thought she could go through with the next hymn, though it had been much loved and often used, both by her mother and Alice.

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is nigh.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life be past;—
Safe into the haven guide,—
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on thee—
Leave, ah! leave me not alone!
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed,
All my help from thee I bring;—
Cover my defenceless head
Beneath the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
Vile and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Still silence;—"silence that spoke!" Ellen did not know what it said, except that her hearers did not wish her to stop. Her next was a very favorite hymn of them all.

"What are these in bright array," &c.

Ellen had allowed her thoughts to travel too far along with the words, for in the last lines her voice was unsteady and faint. She was fain to make a longer pause than usual to recover herself. But in vain; the tender nerve was touched; there was no stilling its quivering.

"Ellen"—said Mr. Humphreys then after a few minutes. She rose and went to the sofa. He folded her close to his breast.

"Thank you, my child," he said presently;—"you have been a comfort to me. Nothing but a choir of angels could have been sweeter."

As Ellen went away back through the hall her tears almost choked her; but for all that there was a strong throb of pleasure at her heart.

"I have been a comfort to him," she repeated. "Oh dear Alice!—so I will!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

"A child no more!—a maiden now—
A graceful maiden with a gentle brow;
A cheek tinged lightly, and a dove-like eye,
And all hearts bless her as she passes by."

MARY HOWITT.

THE whole Marshman family returned to Ventnor immediately after the funeral, Mr. George excepted; he stayed with Mr. Humphreys over the Sabbath, and preached for him; and much to every one's pleasure lingered still a day or two longer; then he was obliged to leave them. John also must go back to Doncaster for a few weeks; he would not be able to get home again before the early part of August. For the month between and as much longer indeed as possible, Mrs. Marshman wished to have Ellen at Ventnor; assuring her that it was to be her home always whenever she chose to make it so. At first neither Mrs. Marshman nor her daughters would take any denial; and old Mr. Marshman was fixed upon it. But Ellen begged with tears that she might stay at home and begin at once, as far as she could, to take Alice's place. Her kind friends insisted that it would do her harm to be left alone for so long, at such a season. Mr. Humphreys in the best of times kept very much to himself, and now he would more than ever; she would be very lonely. "But how lonely *he* will be if I go away!" said Ellen;—"I can't go." Finding that her heart was set upon it, and that it would be a real grief to her to go to Ventnor, John at last joined to excuse her; and he made an arrangement with Mrs. Vawse instead that she should come and stay with Ellen at the parsonage till he came back. This gave Ellen great satisfaction; and her kind Ventnor friends were obliged unwillingly to leave her.

The first few days after John's departure were indeed sad

days—very sad to every one; it could not be otherwise. Ellen drooped miserably. She had, however, the best possible companion in her old Swiss friend. Her good sense, her steady cheerfulness, her firm principle were always awake for Ellen's good, ever ready to comfort her, to cheer her, to prevent her from giving undue way to sorrow, to urge her to useful exertion. Affection and gratitude, to the living and the dead, gave powerful aid to these efforts. Ellen rose up in the morning and lay down at night with the present pressing wish to do and be for the ease and comfort of her adopted father and brother all that it was possible for her. Very soon, so soon as she could rouse herself to anything, she began to turn over in her mind all manner of ways and means for this end. And in general, whatever Alice would have wished, what John did wish, was law to her.

"Margery," said Ellen one day, "I wish you would tell me all the things Alice used to do; so that I may begin to do them, you know, as soon as I can."

"What things, Miss Ellen?"

"I mean, the things she used to do about the house, or to help you,—don't you know?—all sorts of things. I want to know them all, so that I may do them as she did. I want to very much."

"O, Miss Ellen, dear," said Margery tearfully, "you are too little and tender to do them things;—I'd be sorry to see you, indeed!"

"Why no, I am not, Margery," said Ellen;—"don't you know how I used to do at aunt Fortune's? Now tell me—please, dear Margery! If I can't do it, I won't, you know."

"O, Miss Ellen, she used to see to various things about the house;—I don't know as I can tell 'em all directly; some was to help me; and some to please her father, or Mr. John, if he was at home; she thought of every one else before herself, sure enough."

"Well what, Margery? what were they? Tell me all you can remember."

"Why, Miss Ellen,—for one thing,—she used to go into the library every morning, to put it in order, and dust the books and papers and things; in fact she took the charge of that room entirely; I never went into it at all, unless once or twice in the year, or to wash the windows."

Ellen looked grave; she thought with herself there might be a difficulty in the way of her taking this part of Alice's daily duties; she did not feel that she had the freedom of the library.

"And then," said Margery, "she used to skim the cream for me, most mornings, when I'd be busy; and wash up the breakfast things,—"

"O I forgot all about the breakfast things!" exclaimed Ellen,—"how could I! I'll do them to be sure, after this. I never thought of them, Margery. And I'll skim the cream too."

"Dear Miss Ellen, I wouldn't want you to; I didn't mention it for that, but you was wishing me to tell you—I don't want you to trouble your dear little head about such work. It was more the thoughtfulness that cared about me than the help of all she could do, though that wasn't a little;—I'll get along well enough!—"

"But I should like to,—it would make me happier; and don't you think *I* want to help you too, Margery?"

"The Lord bless you, Miss Ellen," said Margery, in a sort of desperation, setting down one iron and taking up another, "don't talk in that way, or you'll upset me entirely.—I aint a bit better than a child," said she, her tears falling fast on the sheet she was hurriedly ironing.

"What else, dear Margery?" said Ellen presently. "Tell me what else?"

"Well, Miss Ellen," said Margery, dashing away the water from either eye,—"she used to look over the clothes when they went up from the wash; and put them away; and mend them if there was any places wanted mending."

"I am afraid I don't know how to manage that," said Ellen very gravely.—"There is one thing I can do,—I can darn stockings very nicely; but that's only one kind of mending. I don't know much about the other kinds."

"Ah well, but *she* did, however," said Margery, searching in her basket of clothes for some particular pieces. "A beautiful mender she was to be sure! Look here, Miss Ellen,—just see that patch—the way it is put on—so evenly by a thread all round; and the stitches, see—and see the way this rent is darned down;—oh that was the way she did everything!"

"I can't do it so," said Ellen sighing,—"But I can learn;—that I can do. You will teach me Margery, won't you?"

"Indeed Miss Ellen, dear, it's more than I can myself; but I will tell you who will; and that's Mrs. Vawse. I am thinking it was her she learned of in the first place,—but I aint certain. Anyhow she's a first-rate hand."

"Then I'll get her to teach me," said Ellen;—"that will do very nicely. And now Margery, what else?"

"O dear, Miss Ellen,—I don't know,—there was a thousand little things that I'd only recollect at the minute; she'd set the table for me when my hands was uncommon full; and often she'd come out and make some little thing for the master when I wouldn't have the time to do the same myself;—and I can't tell—one can't think of those things but just at the minute. Dear Miss Ellen, I'd be sorry indeed to see you a trying your little hands to do all that she done."

"Never mind Margery," said Ellen, "and she threw her arms round the kind old woman as she spoke,—"I won't trouble you—and you won't be troubled if I am awkward about anything at first, will you?"

Margery could only throw down her holder to return most affectionately as well as respectfully Ellen's caress and press a very hearty kiss upon her forehead.

Ellen next went to Mrs. Vawse to beg her help in the mending and patching line. Her old friend was very glad to see her take up anything with interest, and readily agreed to do her best in the matter. So some old clothes were looked up; pieces of linen, cotton, and flannel gathered together; a large basket found to hold all these rags of shape and no shape; and for the next week or two Ellen was indefatigable. She would sit making vain endeavors to arrange a large linen patch properly, till her cheeks were burning with excitement; and bend over a darn, doing her best to take invisible stitches, till Mrs. Vawse was obliged to assure her it was quite unnecessary to take *so much* pains. Taking pains, however, is the sure way to success. Ellen could not rest satisfied till she had equalled Alice's patching and darning; and though when Mrs. Vawse left her she had not quite reached that point, she was bidding fair to do so in a little while.

In other things she was more at home. She could skim milk well enough, and immediately began to do it for Mar-

gery. She at once also took upon herself the care of the parlor cupboard and all the things in it, which she well knew had been Alice's office; and thanks to Miss Fortune's training, even Margery was quite satisfied with her neat and orderly manner of doing it. Ellen begged her when the clothes came up from the wash, to show her where everything went, so that for the future she might be able to put them away; and she studied the shelves of the linen closet, and the chests of drawers in Mr. Humphreys' room, till she almost knew them by heart. As to the library, she dared not venture. She saw Mr. Humphreys at meals and at prayers,—only then. He had never asked her to come into his study since the night she sang to him, and as for *her* asking—nothing could have been more impossible. Even when he was out of the house, out by the hour, Ellen never thought of going where she had not been expressly permitted to go.

When Mr. Van Brunt informed his wife of Ellen's purpose to desert her service and make her future home at the parsonage, the lady's astonishment was only less than her indignation; the latter not at all lessened by learning that Ellen was to become the adopted child of the house. For a while her words of displeasure were poured forth in a torrent; Mr. Van Brunt meantime saying very little, and standing by like a steadfast rock that the waves dash *past*, not *upon*. She declared this was "the cap-sheaf of Miss Humphreys' doings; she *might* have been wise enough to have expected as much; she wouldn't have been such a fool if she had! This was what she had let Ellen go there for! a pretty return!" But she went on. "She wondered who they thought they had to deal with; did they think she was going to let Ellen go in that way? *she* had the first and only right to her; and Ellen had no more business to go and give herself away than one of her oxen; they would find it out, she guessed, pretty quick; Mr. John and all; she'd have her back in no time!" What were her thoughts and feelings, when after having spent her breath she found her husband quietly opposed to this conclusion, words cannot tell. *Her* words could not; she was absolutely dumb, till he had said his say; and then, appalled by the serenity of his manner she left indignation on one side for the present and began to argue the matter. But Mr. Van Brunt coolly said he had promised; she might get

as many help as she liked, he would pay for them and welcome; but Ellen would have to stay where she was. He had promised Miss Alice; and he wouldn't break his word "for kings, lords, and commons." A most extraordinary expletive for a good republican,—which Mr. Van Brunt had probably inherited from his father and grandfather. What can waves do against a rock? The whilome Miss Fortune disdained a struggle which must end in her own confusion, and wisely kept her chagrin to herself; never even approaching the subject afterwards, with him or any other person. Ellen had left the whole matter to Mr. Van Brunt, expecting a storm and not wishing to share it. Happily it all blew over.

As the month drew to an end, and indeed long before, Ellen's thoughts began to go forward eagerly to John's coming home. She had learned by this time how to mend clothes; she had grown somewhat wonted to her new round of little household duties; in everything else the want of him was felt. Study flagged; though knowing what his wish would be, and what her duty was, she faithfully tried to go on with it. She had no heart for riding or walking by herself. She was lonely; she was sorrowful; she was weary; all Mrs. Vawse's pleasant society was not worth the mere knowledge that *he* was in the house; she longed for his coming.

He had written what day they might expect him. But when it came Ellen found that her feeling had changed; it did not look the bright day she had expected it would. Up to that time she had thought only of herself; now she remembered what sort of a coming home this must be to him; and she dreaded almost as much as she wished for the moment of his arrival. Mrs. Vawse was surprised to see that her face was sadder that day than it had been for many past; she could not understand it. Ellen did not explain. It was late in the day before he reached home, and her anxious watch of hope and fear for the sound of his horse's feet grew very painful. She busied herself with setting the tea-table; it was all done; and she could by no means do anything else. She could not go to the door to listen there; she remembered too well the last time; and she knew he would remember it.

He came at last. Ellen's feeling had judged rightly of his, for the greeting was without a word on either side; and when he left the room to go to his father, it was very, very long before he came back. And it seemed to Ellen for several days that he was more grave and talked less than even the last time he had been at home. She was sorry when Mrs. Vawse proposed to leave them. But the old lady wisely said they would all feel better when she was gone; and it was so. Truly as she was respected and esteemed, on all sides, it was felt a relief by every one of the family when she went back to her mountain-top. They were left to themselves; they saw what their numbers were; there was no restraint upon looks, words, or silence. Ellen saw at once that the gentlemen felt easier, that was enough to make her so. The extreme oppression that had grieved and disappointed her the first few days after John's return, gave place to a softened gravity; and the household fell again into all its old ways; only that upon every brow there was a chastened air of sorrow, in everything that was said a tone of remembrance, and that a little figure was going about where Alice's used to move as mistress of the house.

Thanks to her brother, that little figure was an exceeding busy one. She had in the first place her household duties, in discharging which she was perfectly untiring. From the cream skimmed for Margery, and the cups of coffee poured out every morning for Mr. Humphreys and her brother, to the famous mending which took up often one half of Saturday, whatever she did was done with her best diligence and care; and from love to both the dead and the living, Ellen's zeal never slackened. These things however filled but a small part of her time, let her be as particular as she would; and Mr. John effectually hindered her from being too particular. He soon found a plenty for both her and himself to do.

Not that they ever forgot or tried to forget Alice; on the contrary. They sought to remember her, humbly, calmly, hopefully, thankfully! By diligent performance of duty, by Christian faith, by conversation and prayer, they strove to do this; and after a time succeeded. Sober that winter was, but it was very far from being an unhappy one.

"John," said Ellen one day, some time after Mrs. Vawse

had left them,—"do you think Mr. Humphreys would let me go into his study every day when he is out, to put it in order and dust the books?"

"Certainly. But why does not Margery do it?"

"She does I believe, but she never used to; and I should like to do it very much if I was sure he would not dislike it. I would be careful not to disturb anything; I would leave everything just as I found it."

"You may go when you please, and do what you please there, Ellie."

"But I don't like to—I couldn't without speaking to him first; I should be afraid he would come back and find me there, and he might think I hadn't had leave."

"And you wish *me* to speak to him,—is that it? Cannot you muster resolution enough for that, Ellie?"

Ellen was satisfied, for she knew by his tone he would do what she wanted.

"Father," said John the next morning at breakfast;—"Ellen wishes to take upon herself the daily care of your study, but she is afraid to venture without being assured it will please you to see her there."

The old gentleman laid his hand affectionately on Ellen's head, and told her she was welcome to come and go when she would;—the whole house was hers.

The grave kindness and tenderness of the tone and action spoiled Ellen's breakfast. She could not look at anybody nor hold her head up for the rest of the time.

As Alice had anticipated, her brother was called to take the charge of a church at Randolph, and at the same time another more distant was offered him. He refused them both, rightly judging that his place for the present was at home. But the call from Randolph being pressed upon him very much, he at length agreed to preach for them during the winter; riding thither for the purpose every Saturday and returning to Carra-carra on Monday.

As the winter wore on a grave cheerfulness stole over the household. Ellen little thought how much she had to do with it. She never heard Margery tell her husband, which she often did with great affection, "that that blessed child was the light of the house." And those who felt it the most said nothing. Ellen was sure, indeed, from the way

in which Mr. Humphreys spoke to her, looked at her, now and then laid his hand on her head, and sometimes, very rarely, kissed her forehead, that he loved her and loved to see her about; and that her wish of supplying Alice's place was in some little measure fulfilled. Few as those words and looks were, they said more to Ellen than whole discourses would from other people; the least of them gladdened her heart with the feeling that she was a comfort to him. But she never knew how much. Deep as the gloom still over him was, Ellen never dreamed how much deeper it would have been, but for the little figure flitting round and filling up the vacancy; how much he reposed on the gentle look of affection, the pleasant voice, the watchful thoughtfulness that never left anything undone that she could do for his pleasure. Perhaps he did not know it himself. She was not sure he even noticed many of the little things she daily did or tried to do for him. Always silent and reserved, he was more so now than ever; she saw him little, and very seldom long at a time, unless when they were riding to church together; he was always in his study or abroad. But the trifles she thought he did not see were noted and registered, and repaid with all the affection he had to give.

As for Mr. John, it never came into Ellen's head to think whether she was a comfort to him; he was a comfort to *her;* she looked at it in quite another point of view. He had gone to his old sleeping room up-stairs, which Margery had settled with herself he would make his study; and for that he had taken the sitting-room. This was Ellen's study too, so she was constantly with him; and of the quietest she thought her movements would have to be.

"What are you stepping so softly for?" said he one day, catching her hand as she was passing near him.

"You were busy—I thought you were busy," said Ellen.

"And what then?"

"I was afraid of disturbing you."

"You never disturb me," said he;—"you need not fear it. Step as you please, and do not shut the doors carefully. I see you and hear you; but without any disturbance."

Ellen found it was so. But she was an exception to the general rule; other people disturbed him, as she had one or two occasions of knowing.

Of one thing she was perfectly sure, whatever he might be doing,—that he saw and heard her; and equally sure that if anything were not right she should sooner or later hear of it. But this was a censorship Ellen rather loved than feared. In the first place, she was never misunderstood; in the second, however ironical and severe he might be to others, and Ellen knew he could be both when there was occasion, he never was either to her. With great plainness always, but with an equally happy choice of time and manner, he either said or looked what he wished her to understand. This happened indeed only about comparative trifles; to have seriously displeased him, Ellen would have thought the last great evil that could fall upon her in this world.

One day Margery came into the room with a paper in her hand.

"Miss Ellen," said she in a low tone,—"here is Anthony Fox again—he has brought another of his curious letters that he wants to know if Miss Ellen will be so good as to write out for him once more. He says he is ashamed to trouble you so much."

Ellen was reading, comfortably ensconsed in the corner of the wide sofa. She gave a glance, a most ungratified one, at the very original document in Margery's hand. Unpromising it certainly looked.

"Another! Dear me!—I wonder if there isn't somebody else he could get to do it for him, Margery? I think I have had my share. You don't know what a piece of work it is, to copy out one of those scrawls. It takes me ever so long in the first place to find what he has written, and then to put it so that any one else can make sense of it—I've got about enough of it. Don't you suppose he could find plenty of other people to do it for him?"

"I don't know, Miss Ellen,—I suppose he could."

"Then ask him, do; won't you, Margery? I'm so tired of it! and this is the third one; and I've got something else to do. Ask him if there isn't somebody else he can get to do it;—if there isn't, I will;—tell him I am busy."

Margery withdrew and Ellen buried herself again in her book. Anthony Fox was a poor Irishman, whose uncouth attempts at a letter Ellen had once offered to write out and make straight for him, upon hearing Margery tell of his

lamenting that he could not make one fit to send *home* to his mother.

Presently Margery came in again, stopping this time at the table which Mr. John had pushed to the far side of the room to get away from the fire.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said,—"I am ashamed to be so troublesome,—but this Irish body, this Anthony Fox, has begged me, and I didn't know how to refuse him, to come in and ask for a sheet of paper and a pen for him, sir,—he wants to copy a letter,—if Mr. John would be so good; a quill pen, sir, if you please; he cannot write with any other."

"No," said John coolly. "Ellen will do it."

Margery looked in some doubts from the table to the sofa, but Ellen instantly rose up and with a burning cheek came forward and took the paper from the hand where Margery still held it.

"Ask him to wait a little while, Margery," she said hurriedly,—"I'll do it as soon as I can,—tell him in half an hour."

It was not a very easy nor quick job. Ellen worked at it patiently, and finished it well by the end of the half hour; though with a burning cheek still; and a dimness over her eyes frequently obliged her to stop till she could clear them. It was done, and she carried it out to the kitchen herself.

The poor man's thanks were very warm; but that was not what Ellen wanted. She could not rest till she had got another word from her brother. He was busy; she dared not speak to him; she sat fidgeting and uneasy in the corner of the sofa till it was time to get ready for riding. She had plenty of time to make up her mind about the right and the wrong of her own conduct.

During the ride he was just as usual, and she began to think he did not mean to say anything more on the matter. Pleasant talk and pleasant exercise had almost driven it out of her head, when as they were walking their horses over a level place, he suddenly began.

"By-the-by, you are too busy, Ellie," said he. "Which of your studies shall we cut off?"

"*Please*, Mr. John," said Ellen blushing,—"don't say anything about that! I was not studying at all—I was just amusing myself with a book—I was only selfish and lazy."

"*Only*—I would rather you were too busy, Ellie."

Ellen's eyes filled.

"I was wrong," she said,—"I knew it at the time,—at least as soon as you spoke I knew it; and a little before;—I was very wrong!"

And his keen eye saw that the confession was not out of compliment to him merely; it came from the heart.

"You are right now," he said smiling. "But how are your reins?

Ellen's heart was at rest again.

"O I forgot them," said she gayly,—"I was thinking of something else."

"You must not talk when you are riding, unless you can contrive to manage two things at once; and no more lose command of your horse than you would of yourself."

Ellen's eye met his with all the contrition, affection, and ingenuousness that even he wished to see there; and they put their horses to the canter.

This winter was in many ways a very precious one to Ellen. French gave her now no trouble; she was a clever arithmetician; she knew geography admirably, and was tolerably at home in both English and American history; the way was cleared for the course of improvement in which her brother's hand led and helped her. He put her into Latin; carried on the study of natural philosophy they had begun the year before, and which with his instructions was perfectly delightful to Ellen; he gave her some works of stronger reading than she had yet tried, besides histories in French and English, and higher branches of arithmetic. These things were not crowded together so as to fatigue, nor hurried through so as to overload. Carefully and thoroughly she was obliged to put her mind through every subject they entered upon; and just at that age, opening as her understanding was, it grappled eagerly with all that he gave her, as well from love to learning as from love to him. In reading too, she began to take new and strong delight. Especially two or three new English periodicals, which John sent for on purpose for her, were mines of pleasure to Ellen. There was no fiction in them either; they were as full of instruction as of interest. At all times of the day and night, in her intervals of business, Ellen might be seen with one of these in her hand; nestled among the cushions of the sofa, or on a little

bench by the side of the fireplace in the twilight, where she could have the benefit of the blaze, which she loved to read by as well as ever. Sorrowful remembrances were then flown, all things present were out of view, and Ellen's face was dreamingly happy.

It was well there was always somebody by, who whatever he might himself be doing, never lost sight of her. If ever Ellen was in danger of bending too long over her studies or indulging herself too much in the sofa-corner, she was sure to be broken off to take an hour or two of smart exercise, riding or walking, or to recite some lesson, (and their recitations were very lively things) or to read aloud, or to talk. Sometimes if he saw that she seemed to be drooping or a little sad, he would come and sit down by her side or call her to his, find out what she was thinking about; and then, instead of slurring it over, talk of it fairly and set it before her in such a light that it was impossible to think of it again gloomily, for that day at least. Sometimes he took other ways; but never when he was present allowed her long to look weary or sorrowful. He often read to her, and every day made her read aloud to him. This Ellen disliked very much at first, and ended with as much liking it. She had an admirable teacher. He taught her how to manage her voice and how to manage the language; in both which he excelled himself, and was determined that she should; and besides this their reading often led to talking that Ellen delighted in. Always when he was making copies for her she read to him, and once at any rate in the course of the day.

Every day when the weather would permit, the Black Prince and the Brownie with their respective riders might be seen abroad in the country, far and wide. In the course of their rides Ellen's horsemanship was diligently perfected. Very often their turning place was on the top of the Cat's back, and the horses had a rest and Mrs. Vawse a visit before they went down again. They had long walks too, by hill and dale; pleasantly silent or pleasantly talkative,—all pleasant to Ellen!

Her only lonely or sorrowful time was when John was gone to Randolph. It began early Saturday morning, and perhaps ended with Sunday night; for all Monday was hope and expectation. Even Saturday she had not much time

to mope; that was the day for her great week's mending. When John was gone and her morning affairs were out of the way, Ellen brought out her work basket, and established herself on the sofa for a quiet day's sewing, without the least fear of interruption. But sewing did not always hinder thinking. And then certainly the room did seem very empty, and very still; and the clock, which she never heard the rest of the week, kept ticking an ungracious reminder that she was alone. Ellen would sometimes forget it in the intense interest of some nice little piece of repair which must be exquisitely done in a wristband or a glove; and then perhaps Margery would softly open the door and come in.

"Miss Ellen, dear, you're lonesome enough; isn't there something I can do for you? I can't rest for thinking of your being here all by yourself."

"O never mind Margery," said Ellen smiling,—"I am doing very well. I am living in hopes of Monday. Come and look here Margery,—how will that do?—don't you think I am learning to mend?"

"It's beautiful, Miss Ellen! I can't make out how you've learned so quick. I'll tell Mr. John some time who does these things for him."

"No, indeed, Margery! don't you. *Please* not, Margery. I like to do it very much indeed, but I don't want he should know it, nor Mr. Humphreys. Now you won't, Margery, will you?"

"Miss Ellen, dear, I wouldn't do the least little thing as would be wearisome to you for the whole world. Aren't you tired sitting here all alone?"

"O sometimes, a little," said Ellen sighing. "I can't help that, you know."

"I feel it even out there in the kitchen," said Margery;—I feel it lonesome hearing the house so still; I miss the want of Mr. John's step up and down the room. How fond he is of walking so, to be sure! How do you manage, Miss Ellen, with him making his study here? don't you have to keep uncommon quiet?"

"No," said Ellen,—"no quieter than I like. I do just as I have a mind to.

"I thought, to be sure," said Margery, "he would have taken up stairs for his study, or the next room, one or t'other;

he used to be mighty particular in old times; he didn't like to have anybody round when he was busy; but I am glad he is altered however; it is better for you, Miss Ellen, dear, though I didn't know how you was ever going to make out at first."

Ellen thought for a minute, when Margery was gone, whether it could be that John was putting a force upon his liking for her sake, bearing her presence when he would rather have been without it. But she thought of it only a minute; she was sure, when she recollected herself, that however it happened, she was no hindrance to him in any kind of work; that she went out and came in, and as he had said, he saw and heard her without any disturbance. Besides he had said so; and that was enough.

Saturday evening she generally contrived to busy herself in her books. But when Sunday morning came with its calmness and brightness; when the business of the week was put away, and quietness abroad and at home invited to recollection, then Ellen's thoughts went back to old times, and then she missed the calm sweet face that had agreed so well with the day. She missed her in the morning, when the early sun streamed in through the empty room. She missed her at the breakfast-table, where John was not to take her place. On the ride to church, where Mr. Humphreys was now her silent companion, and every tree in the road and every opening in the lanscape seemed to call for Alice to see it with her. Very much she missed her in church. The empty seat beside her, —the unused hymn-book on the shelf,—the want of her sweet voice in the singing,—oh how it went to Ellen's heart. And Mr. Humphreys' grave steadfast look and tone kept it in her mind; she saw it was in his. Those Sunday mornings tried Ellen. At first they were bitterly sad; her tears used to flow abundantly whenever they could unseen. Time softened this feeling.

While Mr. Humphreys went on to his second service in the village beyond, Ellen stayed at Carra-carra and tried to teach a Sunday school. She determined as far as she could to supply beyond the home circle the loss that was not felt only there. She was able however to gather together but her own four children whom she had constantly taught from the beginning, and two others. The rest were scattered. After

her lunch, which having no companion but Margery was now a short one, Ellen went next to the two old women that Alice had been accustomed to attend for the purpose of reading, and what Ellen called preaching. These poor old people had sadly lamented the loss of the faithful friend whose place they never expected to see supplied in this world, and whose kindness had constantly sweetened their lives with one great pleasure a week. Ellen felt afraid to take so much upon herself, as to try to do for them what Alice had done; however she resolved; and at the very first attempt their gratitude and joy far overpaid her for the effort she had made. Practice and the motive she had, soon enabled Ellen to remember and repeat faithfully the greater part of Mr. Humphreys' morning sermon. Reading the Bible to Mrs. Blockson was easy; she had often done that; and to repair the loss of Alice's pleasant comments and explanations she bethought her of her Pilgrim's Progress. To her delight the old woman heard it greedily, and seemed to take great comfort in it; often referring to what Ellen had read before and begging to hear such a piece over again. Ellen generally went home pretty thoroughly tired, yet feeling happy; the pleasure of doing good still far overbalanced the pains.

Sunday evening was another lonely time; Ellen spent it as best she could. Sometimes with her Bible and prayer, and then she ceased to be lonely; sometimes with so many pleasant thoughts that had sprung up out of the employments of the morning that she could not be sorrowful; sometimes she could not help being both. In any case, she was very apt when the darkness fell to take to singing hymns; and it grew to be a habit with Mr. Humphreys when he heard her to come out of his study and lie down upon the sofa and listen, suffering no light in the room but that of the fire. Ellen never was better pleased than when her Sunday evenings were spent so. She sung with wonderful pleasure when she sung for him; and she made it her business to fill her memory with all the beautiful hymns she ever knew or could find, or that he liked particularly.

With the first opening of her eyes on Monday morning came the thought, "John will be at home to-day!" That was enough to carry Ellen pleasantly through whatever the day might bring. She generally kept her mending of stock-

ings for Monday morning, because with that thought in her head she did not mind anything. She had no visits from Margery on Monday; but Ellen sang over her work, sprang about with happy energy, and studied her hardest; for John in what he expected her to do made no calculations for work of which he knew nothing. He was never at home till late in the day; and when Ellen had done all she had to do and set the supper-table with punctilious care, and a face of busy happiness it would have been a pleasure to see if there had been any one to look at it, she would take what happened to be the favorite book and plant herself near the glass door; like a very epicure, to enjoy both the present and the future at once. Even then the present often made her forget the future; she would be lost in her book, perhaps hunting the elephant in India or fighting Nelson's battles over again, and the first news she would have of what she had set herself there to watch for would be the click of the door-lock or a tap on the glass, for the horse was almost always left at the further door. Back then she came, from India or the Nile; down went the book; Ellen had no more thought but for what was before her.

For the rest of that evening the measure of Ellen's happiness was full. It did not matter whether John were in a talkative or a thoughtful mood; whether he spoke to her and looked at her or not; it was pleasure enough to feel that he was there. She was perfectly satisfied merely to sit down near him, though she did not get a word by the hour together.

CHAPTER XLV.

No in all the welkin was no cloud.

CHAUCER.

ONE Monday evening, John being tired, was resting in the corner of the sofa. The silence had lasted a long time. Ellen thought so, and standing near, she by-and-by put her hand gently into one of his which he was thoughtfully passing through the locks of his hair. Her hand was clasped immediately, and quitting his abstracted look he asked what she had been doing that day? Ellen's thoughts went back to toes of stockings and a long rent in her dress; she merely answered, smiling, that she had been busy.

"Too busy I'm afraid. Come round here and sit down. What have you been busy about?"

Ellen never thought of trying to evade a question of his. She colored and hesitated. He did not press it any further.

"Mr. John," said Ellen, when the silence seemed to have set in again,—"there is something I have been wanting to ask you this great while,"—

"Why hasn't it been *asked* this great while?"

"I didn't quite like to;—I didn't know what you would say to it."

"I am sorry I am at all terrible to you, Ellie."

"Why you are not!" said Ellen laughing,—"how you talk! but I don't much like to ask people things."

"I don't know about that," said he smiling;—"my memory rather seems to say that you ask things pretty often."

"Ah yes,—those things,—but I mean—I don't like to ask things when I am not quite sure how people will like it."

"You are right, certainly, to hesitate when you are doubtful in such a matter; but it is best not to be doubtful when I am concerned."

"Well," said Ellen,—"I wished very much—I was going to ask—if you would have any objection to let me read one of your sermons."

"None in the world, Ellie," said he smiling,—"but they have never been written yet."

"Not written!"

"No—there is all I had to guide me yesterday."

"A half sheet of paper!—and only written on one side!—O I can make nothing of this. What is *this?*—Hebrew?"

"Shorthand."

"And is that all! I cannot understand it," said Ellen, sighing as she gave back the paper.

"What if you were to go with me next time? They want to see you very much at Ventnor."

"So do I want to see them," said Ellen;—"very much indeed."

"Mrs. Marshman sent a most earnest request by me that you would come to her the next time I go to Randolph."

Ellen gave the matter a very serious consideration; if one might judge by her face.

"What do you say to it?"

"I should like to go—*very* much," said Ellen slowly,—"but"—

"But you do not think it would be pleasant?"

"No, no," said Ellen laughing,—"I don't mean that; but I think I would rather not."

"Why?"

"O—I have some reasons."

"You must give me very good ones, or I think I shall overrule your decision, Ellie."

"I have *very* good ones,—plenty of them,—only"—

A glance, somewhat comical in its keenness, overturned Ellen's hesitation.

"I have indeed," said she laughing,—"only I did not want to tell you. The reason why I didn't wish to go was because I thought I should be missed. You don't know how much I miss you," said she with tears in her eyes.

"That is what I was afraid of! Your reasons make against you, Ellie."

"I hope not;—I don't think they ought."

"But Ellie, I am very sure my father would rather miss

you once or twice than have you want what would be good for you."

"I know that! I am sure of that; but that don't alter my feeling, you know. And besides—that isn't all."

"Who else will miss you?"

Ellen's quick look seemed to say that he knew too much already, and that she did not wish him to know more. He did not repeat the question, but Ellen felt that her secret was no longer entirely her own.

"And what do you do, Ellie, when you feel lonely?" he went on presently.

"Ellen's eyes watered at the tone in which these words were spoken; she answered, "Different things."

"The best remedy for it is prayer. In seeking the face of our best friend we forget the loss of others. That is what I try, Ellie, when I feel alone;—do you try it?" said he softly.

Ellen looked up; she could not well speak at that moment.

"There is an antidote in that for every trouble. You know who said, 'he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'"

"It troubles me," said he after a pause,—"to leave you so much alone. I don't know that it were not best to take you with me every week."

"O no!" said Ellen,—"don't think of me. I don't mind it indeed. I do not always feel so—sometimes,—but I get along very well; and I would rather stay here, indeed I would. I am always happy as soon as Monday morning comes."

He rose up suddenly and began to walk up and down the room.

"Mr. John"—

"What, Ellie?"

"I do sometimes seek His face very much when I cannot find it."

She hid her face in the sofa-cushion. He was silent a few minutes, and then stopped his walk.

"There is something wrong then with you, Ellie," he said gently. "How has it been through the week? If you can let day after day pass without remembering your best friend, it may be that when you feel the want you will not readily

find him. How is it daily, Ellie? is seeking his face your first concern? do you give a sufficient time faithfully to your Bible and prayer?"

Ellen shook her head; no words were possible. He took up his walk again. The silence had lasted a length of time and he was still walking, when Ellen came to his side and laid her hand on his arm.

"Have you settled that question with your conscience, Ellie?"

She weepingly answered yes. They walked a few turns up and down.

"Will you promise me, Ellie, that every day when it shall be possible, you will give an hour *at least* to this business?—whatever else may be done or undone?"

Ellen promised; and then with her hand in his they continued their walk through the room till Mr. Humphreys and the servants came in. Her brother's prayer that night Ellen never forgot.

No more was said at that time about her going to Ventnor. But a week or two after John smilingly told her to get all her private affairs arranged and to let her friends know they need not expect to see her the next Sunday, for that he was going to take her with him. As she saw he had made up his mind, Ellen said nothing in the way of objecting; and now that the decision was taken from her was really very glad to go. She arranged everything, as he had said; and was ready Saturday morning to set off with a very light heart.

They went in the sleigh. In a happy quiet mood of mind, Ellen enjoyed everything exceedingly. She had not been to Ventnor in several months; the change of scene was very grateful. She could not help thinking, as they slid along smoothly and swiftly over the hard-frozen snow, that it *was* a good deal pleasanter, for once, than sitting alone in the parlor at home with her work-basket. Those days of solitary duty, however, had prepared her for the pleasure of this one; Ellen knew that, and was ready to be thankful for everything. Throughout the whole way, whether the eye and mind silently indulged in roving, or still better loved talk interrupted that, as it often did, Ellen was in a state of most unmixed and unruffled satisfaction. John had not the slightest reason to doubt the correctness of his judgment in bringing her. He

went in but a moment at Ventnor, and leaving her there, proceeded himself to Randolph.

Ellen was received as a precious lending that must be taken the greatest care of and enjoyed as much as possible while one has it. Mrs. Marshman and Mrs. Chauncey treated her as if she had been their own child. Ellen Chauncey overwhelmed her with joyful caresses, and could scarcely let her out of her arms by night or by day. She was more than ever Mr. Marshman's pet; but indeed she was well petted by all the family. It was a very happy visit.

Even Sunday left nothing to wish for. To her great joy not only Mrs. Chauncey went with her in the morning to hear her brother, (for his church was not the one the family attended,) but the carriage was ordered in the afternoon also; and Mrs. Chauncey and her daughter and Miss Sophia went with her again. When they returned, Miss Sophia, who had taken a very great fancy to her, brought her into her own room and made her lie down with her upon the bed, though Ellen insisted she was not tired.

"Well you ought to be, if you are not," said the lady. "*I* am. Keep away, Ellen Chauncey—you can't be anywhere without talking. You can live without Ellen for half an hour, can't ye? Leave us a little while in quiet."

Ellen for her part was quite willing to be quiet. But Miss Sophia was not sleepy, and it soon appeared had no intention of being silent herself.

"Well how do you like your brother in the pulpit?" she began.

"I like him anywhere, ma'am," said Ellen, smiling a very unequivocal smile.

"I thought he would have come here with you last night; —it is very mean of him! He never comes near us; he always goes to some wretched little lodging or place in the town there;—always; never so much as looks at Ventnor, unless sometimes he may stop for a minute at the door."

"He said he would come here to-night," said Ellen.

"Amazing condescending of him! However, he isn't like anybody else; I suppose we must not judge him by common rules. How is Mr. Humphreys, Ellen?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said Ellen,—"it is hard to tell;

he doesn't say much. I think he is rather more cheerful —if anything—than I expected he would be."

"And how do you get along there, poor child! with only two such grave people about you?"

"I get along very well, ma'am," said Ellen, with what Miss Sophia thought a somewhat curious smile.

"I believe you will grow to be as sober as the rest of them," said she. "How does Mr. John behave?"

Ellen turned so indubitably curious a look upon her at this that Miss Sophia half laughed and went on.

"Mr. Humphreys was not always as silent and reserved as he is now; I remember him when he was different;—though I don't think he ever was much like his son. Did you ever hear about it?"

"About what, ma'am?"

"O all about his coming to this country, and what brought him to Carra-carra?"

"No ma'am."

"My father, you see, had come out long before, but the two families had been always very intimate in England, and it was kept up after he came away. He was a particular friend of an elder brother of Mr. Humphreys; his estate and my grandfather's lay very near each other; and besides, there were other things that drew them to each other;—he married my aunt, for one. My father made several journeys back and forth in the course of years, and so kept up his attachment to the whole family, you know; and he became very desirous to get Mr. Humphreys over here,—this Mr. Humphreys, you know. He was the younger brother—younger brothers in England generally have little or nothing; but you don't know anything about that, Ellen. *He* hadn't anything then but his living, and that was a small one; he had some property left him though, just before he came to America."

"But Miss Sophia"—Ellen hesitated,—"Are you sure they would like I should hear all this?"

"Why yes, child!—of course they would; everybody knows it. Some things made Mr. Humphreys as willing to leave England about that time as my father was to have him. An excellent situation was offered him in one of the best

institutions here, and he came out. That's about—let me see—I was just twelve years old and Alice was one year younger. She and I were just like sisters always from that time. We lived near together, and saw each other every day, and our two families were just like one. But they were liked by everybody. Mrs. Humphreys was a very fine person,—very; oh very! I never saw any woman I admired more. Her death almost killed her husband; and I think Alice—I don't know!—there isn't the least sign of delicate health about Mr. Humphreys nor Mr. John,—not the slightest,—nor about Mrs. Humphreys either. She was a very fine woman!"

"How long ago did she die?" said Ellen.

"Five,—six, seven,—seven years ago. Mr. John had been left in England till a little before. Mr. Humphreys was never the same after that. He wouldn't hold his professorship any longer; he couldn't bear society; he just went and buried himself at Carra-carra. That was a little after we came here."

How much all this interested Ellen! She was glad however when Miss Sophia seemed to have talked herself out, for she wanted very much to think over John's sermon. And as Miss Sophia happily fell into a doze soon after, she had a long quiet time for it, till it grew dark, and Ellen Chauncey whose impatience could hold no longer came to seek her.

John came in the evening. Ellen's patience and politeness were severely tried in the course of it; for while she longed exceedingly to hear what her brother and the older members of the family were talking about,—animated delightful conversation she was sure,—Ellen Chauncey detained her in another part of the room; and for a good part of the evening she had to bridle her impatience, and attend to what she did not care about. She did it, and Ellen Chauncey did not suspect it; and at last she found means to draw both her and herself near the larger group. But they seemed to have got through what they were talking about; there was a lull. Ellen waited; and hoped they would begin again.

"You had a full church this afternoon, Mr. John," said Miss Sophia.

He bowed gravely.

"Did you know whom you had among your auditors? the

—— and —— were there;" naming some distinguished strangers in the neighborhood.

"I think I saw them."

"You 'think' you did! Is that an excess of pride or an excess of modesty? Now do be a reasonable creature, and confess that you are not insensible to the pleasure and honor of addressing such an audience!"

Ellen saw something like a flash of contempt, for an instant, in his face, instantly succeeded by a smile.

"Honestly, Miss Sophia, I was much more interested in an old woman that sat at the foot of the pulpit stairs."

"That old thing!" said Miss Sophia.

"I saw her," said Mrs. Chauncey;—"poor old creature! she seemed most deeply attentive when I looked at her."

"*I* saw her!" cried Ellen Chauncey,—"and the tears were running down her cheeks several times."

"I didn't see her," said Ellen Montgomery, as John's eye met hers. He smiled.

"But do you mean to say," continued Miss Sophia, "that you are absolutely careless as to who hears you?"

"I have always one hearer, Miss Sophia, of so much dignity, that it sinks the rest into great insignificance."

"That is a rebuke," said Miss Sophia;—"but nevertheless I shall tell you that I liked you very much this afternoon."

He was silent.

"I suppose you will tell me next," said the young lady laughing, "that you are sorry to hear me say so."

"I am," said he gravely.

"Why?—may I ask?"

"You show me that I have quite failed in my aim, so far at least as one of my hearers was concerned."

"How do you know that?"

"Do you remember what Louis the Fourteenth said to Massillon?—Mon père, j'ai entendre plusieurs grands orateurs dans ma chapelle; j'en ai été fort content: pour vous, toutes les fois que je vous ai entendre, j'ai été très mécontent de moi-même!"

Ellen smiled. Miss Sophia was silent for an instant.

"Then you really mean to be understood, that provided you fail of your aim, as you say, you do not care a straw what people think of you?"

"As I would take a bankrupt's promissory note in lieu of tolc' gold. It gives me small gratification Miss Sophia,—very small indeed,—to see the bowing heads of the grain that yet my sickle cannot reach."

"I agree with you most heartily," said Mr. George Marshman. The conversation dropped; and the two gentlemen began another in an under tone, pacing up and down the floor together.

The next morning, not sorrowfully, Ellen entered the sleigh again and they set off homewards.

"What a sober little piece that is," said Mr. Howard.

"O!—sober!" cried Ellen Chauncey;—"that is because you don't know her, uncle Howard. She is the cheerfullest, happiest girl that I ever saw,—always."

"Except Ellen Chauncey,—always," said her uncle.

"She is a singular child," said Mrs. Gillepsie. "She is grave certainly, but she don't look moped at all, and I should think she would be, to death."

"There's not a bit of moping about her," said Miss Sophia. "She can laugh and smile as well as anybody; though she has sometimes that peculiar grave look of the eyes that would make a stranger doubt it. I think John Humphreys has infected her; he has something of the same look himself."

"I am not sure whether it is the eyes or the mouth Sophia," said Mr. Howard.

"It is both!" said Miss Sophia. "Did you ever see the eyes look one way, and the mouth another?"

"And besides," said Ellen Chauncey, "she has reason to look sober, I am sure."

"She is a fascinating child," said Mrs. Gillepsie. "I cannot comprehend where she gets the manner she has. I never saw a more perfectly polite child; and there she has been for months with nobody to speak to but two gentlemen and the servants. It is natural to her, I suppose; she can have nobody to teach her."

"I am not so sure as to that," said Miss Sophia; "but I have noticed the same thing often. Did you observe her last night, Matilda, when John Humphreys came in? you were talking to her at the moment;—I saw her, before the door was opened,—I saw the color come and her eye sparkle, but she

did not look towards him for an instant, till you had finished what you were saying to her and she had given, as she always does, her modest quiet answer; and then her eye went straight as an arrow to where he was standing."

"And yet," said Mrs. Chauncey, "she never moved towards him when you did, but stayed quietly on that side of the room with the young ones till he came round to them, and it was some time too."

"She is an odd child," said Miss Sophia, laughing,—"what do you think she said to me yesterday? I was talking to her and getting rather communicative on the subject of my neighbors' affairs; and she asked me gravely,—the little monkey!—if I was sure they would like her to hear it? I felt quite rebuked; though I didn't choose to let her know as much."

"I wish Mr. John would bring her every week," said Ellen Chauncey sighing; "it would be too pleasant to have her."

Towards the end of the winter Mr. Humphreys began to propose that his son should visit England and Scotland during the following summer. He wished him to see his family and to know his native country, as well as some of the most distinguished men and institutions in both kingdoms. Mr. George Marshman also urged upon him some business in which he thought he could be eminently useful. But Mr. John declined both propositions, still thinking he had more important duties at home. This only cloud that rose above Ellen's horizon, scattered away.

One evening, it was a Monday, in the twilight, John was as usual pacing up and down the floor. Ellen was reading in the window.

"Too late for you, Ellie."

"Yes," said Ellen,—"I know—I will stop in two minutes"—

But in a quarter of that time she had lost every thought of stopping, and knew no longer that it was growing dusk. Somebody else, however, had not forgotten it. The two minutes were not ended, when a hand came between her and the page and quietly drew the book away.

"O I beg your pardon!" cried Ellen starting up. "I entirely forgot all about it!"

He did not look displeased; he was smiling. He drew her arm within his.

"Come and walk with me. Have you had any exercise to-day?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I had a good deal to do, and I had fixed myself so nicely on the sofa with my books; and it looked cold and disagreeable out of doors."

"Since when have you ceased to be a fixture?"

"What!—Oh," said Ellen laughing,—"how shall I ever get rid of that troublesome word? What shall I say?—I had *arranged* myself, *established* myself, so nicely on the sofa."

"And did you think that a sufficient reason for not going out?"

"No," said Ellen, "I did not; and I did not decide that I would not go; and yet I let it keep me at home after all;—just as I did about reading a few minutes ago. I meant to stop, but I forgot it, and I should have gone on I don't know how long if you had not stopped me. I very often do so."

He paused a minute, and then said,

"You must not do so any more, Ellie.

The tone, in which there was a great deal both of love and decision, wound round Ellen's heart, and constrained her to answer immediately,

"I will not—I will not."

"Never parley with conscience;—it is a dangerous habit."

"But then—it was only—"

"About trifles; I grant you; but the habit is no trifle. There will not be a just firmness of mind and steadfastness of action, where tampering with duty is permitted even in little things."

"I will try not to do it," Ellen repeated.

"No," said he smiling,—"let it stand as at first. '*I will not*,' means something; '*I will try*,' is very apt to come to nothing. 'I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart!'—not 'I will *try*.' Your reliance is precisely the same in either case."

"I will not, John," said Ellen smiling.

"What were you poring over so intently a while ago?"

"It was an old magazine—Blackwood's Magazine, I believe, is the name of it—I found two great piles of them in a closet up stairs the other day; and I brought this one down."

"This is the first that you have read?"

"Yes—I got very much interested in a curious story there;—why?"

"What will you say, Ellie, if I ask you to leave the rest of the two piles unopened?"

"Why, I will say that I will do it, of course," said Ellen, with a little smothered sigh of regret however;—"if you wish it."

"I do wish it, Ellie."

"Very well—I'll let them alone then. I have enough other reading; I don't know how I happened to take that one up; because I saw it there, I suppose."

"Have you finished Nelson yet?"

"O yes!—I finished it Saturday night. O I like it *very* much! I am going all over it again though. I like Nelson very much; don't you?"

"Yes—as well as I can like a man of very fine qualities without principle."

"Was he that?" said Ellen.

"Yes; did you not find it out? I am afraid your eyes were blinded by admiration."

"Were they!" said Ellen. "I thought he was so very fine, in everything; and I should be sorry to think he was not."

"Look over the book again by all means, with a more critical eye; and when you have done so you shall give me your cool estimate of his character."

"O me!" said Ellen. "Well,—but I don't know whether I can give you a *cool* estimate of him;—however I'll try. I cannot think coolly of him now, just after Trafalgar. I think it was a shame that Collingwood did not anchor as Nelson told him to; don't you? I think he might have been obeyed while he was living, at least."

"It is difficult," said John smiling, "to judge correctly of many actions without having been on the spot and in the circumstances of the actors. I believe you and I must leave the question of Trafalgar to more nautical heads."

"How pleasant this moonlight is!" said Ellen.

"What makes it pleasant?"

"What *makes* it pleasant!—I don't know; I never thought of such a thing. It is *made* to be pleasant,—I can't tell *why;* can anybody?"

"The eye loves light for many reasons, but all kinds of light are not equally agreeable. What makes the peculiar charm of these long streams of pale light across the floor? and the shadowy brightness without?"

"You must tell," said Ellen; "I cannot."

"You know we enjoy anything much more by contrast; I think that is one reason. Night is the reign of darkness, which we do not love; and here is light struggling with the darkness, not enough to overcome it entirely, but yet banishing it to nooks and corners and distant parts, by the side of which it shows itself in contrasted beauty. Our eyes bless the unwonted victory."

"Yes," said Ellen,—"we only have moonlight nights once in a while."

"But that is only one reason out of many, and not the greatest. It is a very refined pleasure, and to resolve it into its elements is something like trying to divide one of these same white rays of light into the many various colored ones that go to form it;—and not by any means so easy a task."

"Then it was no wonder I couldn't answer," said Ellen.

"No—you are hardly a full-grown philosopher yet, Ellie."

"The moonlight is so calm and quiet," Ellen observed admiringly.

"And why is it calm and quiet?—I must have an answer to that."

"Because *we* are generally calm and quiet at such times?" Ellen ventured after a little thought.

"Precisely!—we and the world. And association has given the moon herself the same character. Besides that her mild sober light is not fitted for the purposes of active employment, and therefore the more graciously invites us to the pleasures of thought and fancy."

"I am loving it more and more, the more you talk about it," said Ellen laughing.

"And there you have touched another reason, Ellie, for the pleasure we have, not only in moonlight, but in most other things. When two things have been in the mind together, and made any impression, the mind *associates* them; and you

cannot see or think of the one without bringing back the remembrance or the feeling of the other. If we have enjoyed the moonlight in pleasant scenes, in happy hours, with friends that we loved,—though the sight of it may not always make us directly remember them, it yet brings with it a waft from the feeling of the old times,—sweet as long as life lasts!"

"And sorrowful things may be associated too?" said Ellen.

"Yes, and sorrowful things.—But this power of association is the cause of half the pleasure we enjoy. There is a tune my mother used to sing—I cannot hear it now without being carried swiftly back to my boyish days,—to the very spirit of the time; I *feel* myself spring over the greensward as I did then."

"Oh I know that is true," said Ellen. "The camellia, the white camellia you know,—I like it so much ever since what you said about it one day. I never see it without thinking of it; and it would not seem half so beautiful but for that."

"What did I say about it?"

"Don't you remember? you said it was like what you ought to be, and what you should be if you ever reached heaven; and you repeated that verse in the Revelation about 'those that have not defiled their garments.' I always think of it. It seems to give me a lesson."

"How eloquent of beautiful lessons all nature would be to us," said John musingly, "if we had but the eye and the ear to take them in."

"And in that way you would heap associations upon associations?"

"Yes; till our storehouse of pleasure was very full."

"You do that now," said Ellen. "I wish you would teach me."

"I have read precious things sometimes in the bunches of flowers you are so fond of, Ellie. Cannot you?"

"I don't know—I only think of themselves; except—sometimes, they make me think of Alice."

"You know from any works we may form some judgment of the mind and character of their author?"

"From their writings, I know you can," said Ellen!—"from what other works?"

"From any which are not mechanical; from any in which the mind, not the hand, has been the creating power. I saw

you very much interested the other day in the Eddystone lighthouse; did it help you to form no opinion of Mr. Smeaton ?"

"Why yes, certainly," said Ellen,—"I admired him exceedingly for his cleverness and perseverance; but what other works ?—I can't think of any."

"There is the lighthouse,—that is one thing. What do you think of the ocean waves that now and then overwhelm it ?"

Ellen half shuddered. "I shouldn't like to go to sea, John! But you were speaking of men's works and women's works ?"

"Well, women's works,—I cannot help forming some notion of a lady's mind and character from the way she dresses herself."

"Can you! do you!"

"I cannot help doing it. Many things appear in the style of a lady's dress that she never dreams of;—the style of her thoughts among others."

"It is a pity ladies didn't know that," said Ellen laughing; —"they would be very careful."

"It wouldn't mend the matter, Ellie. That is one of the things in which people are obliged to speak truth. As the mind is, so it will show itself."

"But we have got a great way from the flowers," said Ellen.

"You shall bring me some to-morrow, Ellie, and we will read them together."

"There are plenty over there now," said Ellen, looking towards the little flower-stand, which was as full and as flourishing as ever,—"but we couldn't see them well by this light."

"A bunch of flowers seems to bring me very near the hand that made them. They are the work of his fingers; and I cannot consider them without being joyfully assured of the glory and loveliness of their Creator. It is written as plainly to me in their delicate painting and sweet breath and curious structure, as in the very pages of the Bible; though no doubt without the Bible I could not read the flowers."

"I never thought much of that," said Ellen. "And then you find particular lessons in particular flowers ?"

"Sometimes."

"O come here !" said Ellen, pulling him towards the flower-

stand,—"and tell me what this daphne is like—you need not see that, only smell it, that's enough;—do John, and tell me what it is like!"

He smiled as he complied with her request, and walked away again.

"Well, what is it?" said Ellen; "I know you have thought of something."

"It is like the fragrance that Christian society sometimes leaves upon the spirit; when it is just what it ought to be."

"My Mr. Marshman!" exclaimed Ellen.

John smiled again. "I thought of him, Ellie. And I thought also of Cowper's lines:—

> "'When one who holds communion with the skies,
> Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
> Descends and dwells among us meaner things,—
> It is as if an angel shook his wings!'"

Ellen was silent a minute from pleasure.

"Well, I have got an association now with the daphne!" she said joyously; and presently added sighing,—"How much you see in everything, that I do not see at all."

"Time, Ellie," said John;—"there must be time for that. It will come. Time is cried out upon as a great thief; it is people's own fault. Use him but well; and you will get from his hand more than he will ever take from you."

Ellen's thoughts traveled on a little way from this speech,—and then came a sigh, of some burden, as it seemed; and her face was softly laid against the arm she held.

"Let us leave all that to God," said John gently.

Ellen started. "How did you know—how could you know what I was thinking of?"

"Perhaps my thoughts took the same road," said he smiling. "But Ellie, dear, let us look to that one source of happiness that can never be dried up; it is not safe to count upon anything else."

"It is not wonderful," said Ellen in a tremulous voice,—"if I"—

"It is not wonderful, Ellie, nor wrong. But we, who look up to God as our Father,—who rejoice in Christ our Saviour,—we are happy, whatever beside we may gain or lose. Let us trust him, and never doubt that, Ellie."

"But still"—said Ellen.

"But still, we will hope and pray alike in that matter. And while we do, and may, with our whole hearts, let us leave ourselves in our Father's hand. The joy of the knowledge of Christ! the joy the world cannot intermeddle with, the peace it cannot take away!—Let us make that our own, Ellie; and for the rest, put away all anxious care about what we cannot control."

Ellen's hand however did not just then lie quite so lightly on his arm as it did a few minutes ago; he could feel that; and could see the glitter of one or two tears in the moonlight as they fell. The hand was fondly taken in his; and as they slowly paced up and down, he went on in low tones of kindness and cheerfulness with his pleasant talk, till she was too happy in the present to be anxious about the future; looked up again brightly into his face, and questions and answers came as gayly as ever.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Who knows what may happen? Patience and shuffle the cards! . . . Perhaps, after all, I shall some day go to Rome, and come back St. Peter.—LONGFELLOW.

THE rest of the winter, or rather the early part of the spring, passed happily away. March, at Thirlwall, seemed more to belong to the former than the latter. Then spring came in good earnest; April and May brought warm days and wild flowers. Ellen refreshed herself and adorned the room with quantities of them; and as soon as might be she set about restoring the winter-ruined garden. Mr. John was not fond of gardening; he provided her with all manner of tools, ordered whatever work she wanted to be done for her, supplied her with new plants, and seeds, and roots, and was always ready to give her his help in any operations or press of business that called for it. But for the most part Ellen hoed, and raked, and transplanted, and sowed seeds, while he walked or read; often giving his counsel indeed, asked and unasked, and always coming in between her and any difficult or heavy job. The hours thus spent were to Ellen hours of unmixed delight. When he did not choose to go himself he sent Thomas with her, as the garden was some little distance down the mountain, away from the house and from everybody; he never allowed her to go there alone.

As if to verify Mr. Van Brunt's remark, that "something is always happening most years," about the middle of May there came letters that after all determined John's going abroad. The sudden death of two relatives, one after the other, had left the family estate to Mr. Humphreys; it required the personal attendance either of himself or his son; he could not, therefore his son must, go. Once on the other side of the Atlantic, Mr. John thought it best his going should fulfill all the ends for which both Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Marshman had desired it; this would occasion his stay to be

prolonged to at least a year, probably more. And he must set off without delay.

In the midst, not of his hurry, for Mr. John seldom was or seemed to be in a hurry about anything; but in the midst of his business, he took special care of everything that concerned or could possibly concern Ellen. He arranged what books she should read, what studies she should carry on; and directed that about these matters as well as about all others she should keep up a constant communication with him by letter. He requested Mrs. Chauncey to see that she wanted nothing, and to act as her general guardian in all minor things, respecting which Mr. Humphreys could be expected to take no thought whatever. And what Ellen thanked him for most of all, he found time for all his wonted rides, and she thought more than his wonted talks with her; endeavoring, as he well knew how, both to strengthen and cheer her mind in view of his long absence. The memory of those hours never went from her.

The family at Ventnor were exceeding desirous that she should make one of them during all the time John should be gone; they urged it with every possible argument. Ellen said little, but he knew she did not wish it; and finally compounded the matter by arranging that she should stay at the parsonage through the summer, and spend the winter at Ventnor, sharing all Ellen Chauncey's advantages of every kind. Ellen was all the more pleased with this arrangement that Mr. George Marshman would be at home. The church John had been serving were become exceedingly attached to him and would by no means hear of giving him up; and Mr. George had engaged, if possible, to supply his place while he should be away. Ellen Chauncey was in ecstatics. And it was further promised that the summer should not pass without as many visits on both sides as could well be brought about.

Ellen had the comfort, at the last, of hearing John say that she had behaved unexceptionably well where he knew it was difficult for her to behave well at all. That *was* a comfort, from him, whose notions of unexceptionable behavior, she knew, were remarkably high. But the parting, after all, was a dreadfully hard matter; though softened as much as it could be at the time and rendered very sweet to Ellen's

memory by the tenderness, gentleness, and kindness, with which her brother without checking soothed her grief. He was to go early in the morning; and he made Ellen take leave of him the night before; but he was in no hurry to send her away; and when at length he told her it was very late, and she rose up to go, he went with her to the very door of her room and there bade her good-night.

How the next days passed Ellen hardly knew; they were unspeakably long.

Not a week after, one morning Nancy Vawse came into the kitchen, and asked in her blunt fashion,

"Is Ellen Montgomery at home?"

"I believe Miss Ellen is in the parlor," said Margery dryly.

"I want to speak to her."

Margery silently went across the hall to the sitting-room.

"Miss Ellen, dear," she said softly, "here is that Nancy girl wanting to speak with you,—will you please to see her?"

Ellen eagerly desired Margery to let her in, by no means displeased to have some interruption to the sorrowful thoughts she could not banish. She received Nancy very kindly.

"Well, I declare, Ellen!" said that young lady, whose wandering eye was upon everything but Ellen herself,—"aint you as fine as a fiddle? I guess you never touch your fingers to a file now-a-days,—do you?"

"A file!" said Ellen.

"You ha'n't forgot what it means, I s'pose," said Nancy somewhat scornfully,—"'cause if you think I'm a going to swallow that, you're mistaken. I've seen you file off tables down yonder a few times, ha'n't I?"

"O I remember now," said Ellen smiling;—"it is so long since I heard the word that I didn't know what you meant. Margery calls it a dishcloth, or a floorcloth, or something else."

"Well you don't touch one now-a-days, do you?'

"No," said Ellen, "I have other things to do."

"Well I guess you have. You've got enough of books now, for once, ha'n't you? What a lot!—I say, Ellen, have you got to read all these?"

"I hope so, in time," said Ellen smiling. "Why haven't you been to see me before?"

"Oh—I don't know!"—said Nancy, whose roving eye

looked a little as if she felt herself out of her sphere. "I didn't know as you would care to see me now."

"I am very sorry you should think so, Nancy; I would be as glad to see you as ever. I have not forgotten all your old kindness to me when aunt Fortune was sick."

"You've forgotten all that went before that, I s'pose," said Nancy with a half laugh. "You beat all! Most folks remember and forget just t'other way exactly. But besides, I did'nt know but I should catch myself in queer company."

"Well—I am all alone now," said Ellen with a sigh.

"Yes, if you warn't I wouldn't be here, I can tell you. What do you think I have come for to-day, Ellen?"

"For anything but to see me?"

Nancy nodded very decisively.

"What?"

"Guess."

"How can I possibly guess? What have you got tucked up in your apron there?"

"Ah!—that's the very thing," said Nancy. "What *have* I got, sure enough?"

"Well, I can't tell through your apron," said Ellen smiling.

"And *I* can't tell either;—that's more, aint it? Now listen, and I'll tell you where I got it, and then you may find out what it is, for I don't know. Promise you won't tell anybody."

"I don't like to promise that, Nancy."

"Why?"

"Because it might be something I ought to tell somebody about."

"But it aint."

"If it isn't I won't tell. Can't you leave it so?"

"But what a plague! Here I have gone and done all this just for you, and now you must go and make a fuss. What hurt would it do you to promise?—it's nobody's business but yours and mine, and somebody else's that won't make any talk about it I promise you."

"I won't speak of it certainly, Nancy, unless I think I ought; can't you trust me?"

"I wouldn't give two straws for anybody else's say so," said

Nancy;—"but as you're as stiff as the mischief I s'pose I'll have to let it go. I'll trust you! Now listen. It don't look like anything, does it?"

"Why no," said Ellen laughing; "you hold your apron so loose that I cannot see anything."

"Well now listen. You know I've been helping down at your aunt's,—did you?"

"No."

"Well I have,—these six weeks. You never see anything go on quieter than they do, Ellen. I declare it's fun. Miss Fortune never was so good in her days. I don't mean she aint as ugly as ever, you know, but she has to keep it in. All I have to do if I think anything is going wrong, I just let her think I am going to speak to *him* about it;—only I have to do it very cunning for fear she would guess what I am up to; and the next thing I know it's all straight. He *is* about the coolest shaver," said Nancy, "I ever did see. The way he walks through her notions once in a while—not very often, mind you, but when he takes a fancy,—it's fun to see! O I can get along there first-rate now. *You'd* have a royal time, Ellen."

"Well, Nancy—your story?"

"Don't you be in a hurry! I am going to take my time. Well I've been there this six weeks; doing all sorts of things, you know; taking your place, Ellen; don't you wish you was back in it?—Well a couple of weeks since, Mrs. Van took it into her head she would have up the wagon and go to Thirlwall to get herself some things; a queer start for her; but at any rate Van Brunt brought up the wagon and in she got and off they went. Now *she meant*, you must know, that I should be fast in the cellar-kitchen all the while she was gone, and she thought she had given me enough to keep me busy there; but I was up to her! I was as spry as a cricket, and flew round, and got things put up; and then I thought I'd have some fun. What do you think I did?—Mrs. Montgomery was quietly sitting in the chimney-corner and I had the whole house to myself. How Van Brunt looks out for her, Ellen; he won't let her be put out for anything or anybody."

"I am glad of it," said Ellen, her face flushing and her eyes watering; "it is just like him. I love him for it."

"The other night she was mourning and lamenting at a

great rate because she hadn't you to read to her; and what do you think he does but goes and takes the book and sits down and reads to her himself. You should have seen Mrs. Van's face!"

"What book?" said Ellen.

"What book? why your book,—the Bible,—there aint any other book in the house, as I know. What on earth are you crying for, Ellen?—He's fetched over his mother's old Bible, and there it lays on a shelf in the cupboard; and he has it out every once in a while. Maybe he's coming round, Ellen. But do hold up your head and listen to me! I can't talk to you when you lie with your head in the cushion like that. I ha'n't more than begun my story yet."

"Well, go on," said Ellen.

"You see, I aint in any hurry," said Nancy,—"because as soon as I've finished I shall have to be off; and it's fun to talk to you. What do you think I did, when I had done up all my chores?—where do you think I found this, eh? *you'd* never guess."

"What is it?" said Ellen

"No matter what it is;—I don't know;—where do you think I found it?"

"How can I tell? I don't know."

"You'll be angry with me when I tell you."

Ellen was silent.

"If it was anybody else," said Nancy,—"I'd ha' seen 'em shot afore I'd ha' done it, or told of it either; but you aint like anybody else. Look here!" said she, tapping her apron gently with one finger and slowly marking off each word,—"this—came out of—your—aunt's—box—in—the closet—up stairs—in—her room,"

"Nancy!"

"Ay, Nancy! there it is. Now you look! 'Twont alter it, Ellen; that's where it was, if you look till tea-time."

"But how came you there?"

"'Cause I wanted to amuse myself, I tell you. Partly to please myself, and partly because Mrs. Van would be so mad if she knew it."

"O Nancy!"

"Well—I don't say it was right,—but anyhow I did it! you ha'n't heard what I found yet."

"You had better put right it back again, Nancy, the first time you have a chance."

"Put it back again!—I'll give it to you, and then *you* may put it back again, if you have a mind. I should like to see you! Why you don't know what I found."

"Well what did you find?"

"The box was chuck full of all sorts of things, and I had a mind to see what was in it, so I pulled 'em out one after the other till I got to the bottom. At the very bottom was some letters and papers, and there,—staring right in my face,—the first thing I see was, 'Miss Ellen Montgomery.'"

"O Nancy!" screamed Ellen,—"a letter for me?"

"Hush!—and sit down, will you?—yes, a whole package of letters for you. Well, thought I, Mrs. Van has no right to that anyhow, and she aint a going to take the care of it any more; so I just took it up and put it in the bosom of my frock while I looked to see if there was any more for you, but there warn't. There it is!—

And she tossed the package into Ellen's lap. Ellen's head swam.

"Well, good-bye!" said Nancy rising;—"I may go now I suppose, and no thanks to me."

"Yes I do—I do thank you very much, Nancy," cried Ellen, starting up and taking her by the hand,—"I do thank you,—though it wasn't right;—but O how could she! how could she!"

"Dear me!" said Nancy; "to ask that of Mrs. Van! she could do anything. *Why* she did it, aint so easy to tell."

Ellen, bewildered, scarcely knew, only *felt*, that Nancy had gone. The outer cover of her package, the seal of which was broken, contained three letters; two addressed to Ellen, in her father's hand, the third to another person. The seals of these had not been broken. The first that Ellen opened she saw was all in the same hand with the direction; she threw it down and eagerly tried the other. And yes! there was indeed the beloved character of which she never thought to have seen another specimen. Ellen's heart swelled with many feelings; thankfulness, tenderness, joy, and sorrow, past and present;—*that* letter was not thrown down, but grasped, while tears fell much too fast for eyes to do their work. It was long before she could get far in the letter. But when

she had fairly begun it she went on swiftly, and almost breathlessly, to the end.

"My dear, dear little Ellen,

"I am scarcely able—but I must write to you once more. *Once* more, daughter, for it is not permitted me to see your face again in this world. I look to see it, my dear child, where it will be fairer than ever here it seemed, even to me. I shall die in this hope and expectation. Ellen, remember it. Your last letters have greatly encouraged and rejoiced me. I am comforted, and can leave you quietly in that hand that has led me and I believe is leading you. God bless you, my child!

"Ellen, I have a mother living, and she wishes to receive you as her own when I am gone. It is best you should know at once why I never spoke to you of her. After your aunt Bessy married and went to New-York, it displeased and grieved my mother greatly that I too, who had always been her favorite child, should leave her for an American home. And when I persisted, in spite of all that entreaties and authority could urge, she said she forgave me for destroying all her prospects of happiness, but that after I should be married and gone she should consider me as lost to her entirely, and so I must consider myself. She never wrote to me, and I never wrote to her after I reached America. She was dead to me. I do not say that I did not deserve it.

"But I have written to her lately and she has written to me. She permits me to die in the joy of being entirely forgiven, and in the further joy of knowing that the only source of care I had left is done away. She will take you to her heart, to the place I once filled, and I believe fill yet. She longs to have you, and to have you as entirely her own, in all respects; and to this, in consideration of the wandering life your father leads, and will lead,—I am willing and he is willing to agree. It is arranged so. The old happy home of my childhood will be yours, my Ellen. It joys me to think of it. Your father will write to your aunt and to you on the subject, and furnish you with funds. It is our desire that you should take advantage of the very first opportunity of proper persons going to Scotland who will be willing to take

charge of you. Your dear friends, Mr. and Miss Humphreys, will I dare say help you in this.

"To them I could say much, if I had strength. But words are little. If blessings and prayers from a full heart are worth anything, they are the richer. My love and gratitude to them cannot——"

The writer had failed here; and what there was of the letter had evidently been written at different times. Captain Montgomery's was to the same purpose. He directed Ellen to embrace the first opportunity of suitable guardians, to cross the Atlantic and repair to No — George's street, Edinburgh; said that Miss Fortune would give her the money she would need, which he had written to her to do, and that the accompanying letter Ellen was to carry with her and deliver to Mrs. Lindsay, her grand mother.

Ellen felt as if her head would split. She took up that letter, gazed at the strange name and direction which had taken such new and startling interest for her, wondered over the thought of what she was ordered to do with it, marveled what sort of fingers they were which would open it, or whether it would ever be opened;—and finally, in a perfect maze, unable to read, think, or even weep, she carried her package of letters into her own room, the room that had been Alice's, laid herself on the bed, and them beside her; and fell into a deep sleep.

She woke up towards evening with the pressure of a mountain weight upon her mind. Her thoughts and feelings were a maze still; and not Mr. Humphreys himself could be more grave and abstracted than poor Ellen was that night. So many points were to be settled,—so many questions answered to herself,—it was a good while before Ellen could disentangle them, and know what she did think and feel, and what she would do.

She very soon found out her own mind upon one subject,—she would be exceeding sorry to be obliged to obey the directions in the letters. But must she obey them?

"I have promised Alice," thought Ellen;—"I have promised Mr. Humphreys—I can't be adopted twice. And this Mrs. Lindsay,—my grandmother!—she cannot be nice or she

wouldn't have treated my mother so. She cannot be a nice person;—hard,—she must be hard;—I never want to see her. My mother!—But then my mother loved her, and was very glad to have me go to her. Oh!—oh! how could she! —how could they do so!—when they didn't know how it might be with me, and what dear friends they might make me leave! Oh it was cruel!—But then they did *not* know, that is the very thing—they thought I would have nobody but aunt Fortune, and so it's no wonder—O what shall I do! What *ought* I to do? These people in Scotland must have given me up by this time; it's—let me see—it's just about three years now,—a little less,—since these letters were written. I am older now, and circumstances are changed; I have a home and a father and a brother; may I not judge for myself?—But my mother and my father have ordered me,—what shall I do!—If John were only here—but perhaps he would make me go,—he might think it right. And to leave him,—and maybe never see him again!—and Mr. Humphreys! and how lonely he would be without me,—I cannot! I will not! Oh what *shall* I do! What shall I do!"

Ellen's meditations gradually plunged her in despair; for she could not look at the event of being obliged to go, and she could not get rid of the feeling that perhaps it might come to that. She wept bitterly; it didn't mend the matter. She thought painfully, fearfully, long; and was no nearer an end. She could not endure to submit the matter to Mr. Humphreys; she feared his decision; and she feared also that he would give her the money Miss Fortune had failed to supply for the journey; how much it might be Ellen had no idea. She could not dismiss the subject as decided by circumstances, for conscience pricked her with the fifth commandment. She was miserable. It happily occurred to her at last to take counsel with Mrs. Vawse; this might be done she knew without betraying Nancy; Mrs. Vawse was much too honorable to press her as to how she came by the letters, and her word could easily be obtained not to speak of the affairs to any one. As for Miss Fortune's conduct, it must be made known; there was no help for that. So it was settled; and Ellen's breast was a little lightened of its load of care for that time; she had leisure to think of some other things.

Why had Miss Fortune kept back the letters? Ellen guessed pretty well, but she did not know quite all. The package, with its accompanying dispatch to Miss Fortune, had arrived shortly after Ellen first heard the news of her mother's death, when she was refuged with Alice at the parsonage. At the time of its being sent Captain Montgomery's movements were extremely uncertain; and in obedience to the earnest request of his wife he directed that without waiting for his own return Ellen should immediately set out for Scotland. Part of the money for her expenses he sent; the rest he desired his sister to furnish, promising to make all straight when he should come home. But it happened that he was already this lady's debtor in a small amount, which Miss Fortune had serious doubts of ever being repaid; she instantly determined, that if she had once been a fool in lending him money, she would not a second time in adding to the sum; if he wanted to send his daughter on a wild-goose-chase after great relations, he might come home himself and see to it; it was none of her business. Quietly taking the remittance to refund his own owing, she of course threw the letters into her box, as the delivery of them would expose the whole transaction. There they lay till Nancy found them.

Early next morning after breakfast Ellen came into the kitchen, and begged Margery to ask Thomas to bring the Brownie to the door. Surprised at the energy in her tone and manner, Margery gave the message and added that Miss Ellen seemed to have picked up wonderfully; she hadn't heard her speak so brisk since Mr. John went away.

The Brownie was soon at the door, but not so soon as Ellen, who had dressed in feverish haste. The Brownie was not alone; there was old John saddled and bridled, and Thomas Grimes in waiting.

"It's not necessary for you to take that trouble, Thomas," said Ellen;—"I don't mind going alone at all."

"I beg your pardon Miss Ellen,—(Thomas touched his hat)—but Mr. John left particular orders that I was to go with Miss Ellen whenever it pleased her to ride; never failing."

"Did he!" said Ellen;—"but is it convenient for you now Thomas? I want to go as far as Mrs. Vawse's."

"It's always convenient, Miss Ellen,—always; Miss Ellen need not think of that at all, I am always ready."

Ellen mounted upon the Brownie, sighing for the want of the hand that used to lift her to the saddle; and spurred by this recollection set off at a round pace.

Soon she was at Mrs. Vawse's; and soon, finding her alone, Ellen had spread out all her difficulties before her and given her the letters to read. Mrs. Vawse readily promised to speak on the subject to no one without Ellen's leave; her suspicions fell upon Mr. Van Brunt, not her granddaughter. She heard all the story, and read the letters before making any remark.

"Now, dear Mrs. Vawse," said Ellen anxiously, when the last one was folded up and laid on the table,—"what do you think?"

"I think, my child, you must go," said the old lady steadily.

Ellen looked keenly, as if to find some other answer in her face; her own changing more and more for a minute, till she sunk it in her hands.

"Cela vous donne beaucoup de chagrin,—je le vois bien," said the old lady tenderly. (Their conversations were always in Mrs. Vawse's tongue.)

"But," said Ellen presently, lifting her head again, (there were no tears)—"I cannot go without money."

"That can be obtained without any difficulty."

"From whom? I cannot ask aunt Fortune for it, Mrs. Vawse; I could not do it!"

"There is no difficulty about the money. Show your letters to Mr. Humphreys."

"O I cannot!" said Ellen, covering her face again.

"Will you let me do it? I will speak to him if you permit me."

"But what use? *He* ought not to give me the money, Mrs. Vawse? It would not be right; and to show him the letters would be like asking him for it. O I can't bear to do that!"

"He would give it you, Ellen, with the greatest pleasure."

"Oh no, Mrs. Vawse," said Ellen, bursting into tears,—"he would never be pleased to send me away from him! I know—I know—he would miss me. O what shall I do!"

"Not *that*, my dear Ellen," said the old lady, coming to

her and gently stroking her head with both hands. "You must do what is *right;* and you know it cannot be but that will be the best and happiest for you in the end."

"O I wish—I wish," exclaimed Ellen from the bottom of her heart,—"those letters had never been found!"

"Nay, Ellen, *that* is not right."

"But I promised Alice, Mrs. Vawse; ought I go away and leave him? O, Mrs. Vawse, it is very hard! *Ought* I?"

"Your father and your mother have said it, my child."

"But they never would have said it if they had known?"

"But they did not know, Ellen; and here it is."

Ellen wept violently, regardless of the caresses and soothing words which her old friend lavished upon her.

"There is one thing!" said she at last, raising her head,—"I don't know of anybody going to Scotland, and I am not likely to; and if I only do not before autumn,—that is not a good time to go, and then comes winter."

"My dear Ellen!" said Mrs. Vawse sorrowfully, "I must drive you from your last hope. Don't you know that Mrs. Gillespie is going abroad with all her family?—next month I think."

Ellen grew pale for a minute, and sat holding bitter counsel with her own heart. Mrs. Vawse hardly knew what to say next.

"You need not feel uneasy about your journeying expenses," she remarked after a pause;—"you can easily repay them, if you wish, when you reach your friends in Scotland."

Ellen did not hear her. She looked up with an odd expression of determination in her face, determination taking its stand upon difficulties.

"I sha'n't stay there, Mrs. Vawse, if I go!—I shall go, I suppose, if I must; but do you think anything will keep me there? Never!"

"You will stay for the same reason that you go for, Ellen; to do your duty."

"Yes, till I am old enough to choose for myself, Mrs. Vawse, and then I shall come back; if they will let me."

"Whom do you mean by 'they?'"

"Mr. Humphreys and Mr. John."

"My dear Ellen," said the old lady kindly, "be satisfied with doing your duty now; leave the future. While you fol-

low him, God will be your friend; is not that enough? and all things shall work for your good. You do not know what you will wish when the time comes you speak of. You do not know what new friends you may find to love."

Ellen had in her own heart the warrant for what she had said and what she saw by her smile Mrs. Vawse doubted; but she disdained to assert what she could bring nothing to prove. She took a sorrowful leave of her old friend and returned home.

After dinner, when Mr. Humphreys was about going back to his study, Ellen timidly stopped him and gave him her letters, and asked him to look at them some time when he had leisure. She told him also where they were found and how long they had lain there, and that Mrs. Vawse had said she ought to show them to him."

She guessed he would read them at once,—and she waited with a beating heart. In a little while she heard his step coming back along the hall. He came and sat down by her on the sofa and took her hand.

"What is your wish in this matter, my child?" he said gravely and cheerfully.

Ellen's look answered that.

"I will do whatever you say I must, sir," she said faintly.

"I dare not ask myself what *I* would wish, Ellen; the matter is taken out of our hands. You must do your parents' will, my child. I will try to hope that you will gain more than I lose. As the Lord pleases! If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

"Mrs. Gillespie," he said after a pause, "is about going to England;—I know not how soon. It will be best for you to see her at once and make all arrangements that may be necessary. I will go with you to-morrow to Ventnor, if the day be a good one."

There was something Ellen longed to say, but it was impossible to get it out; she could not utter a word. She had pressed her hands upon her face to try to keep herself quiet; but Mr. Humphreys could see the deep crimson flushing to the very roots of her hair. He drew her close within his arms for a moment, kissed her forehead, Ellen *felt* it was sadly, and went away. It was well she did not hear him sigh as he went back along the hall; it was well she did not

see the face of more settled gravity with which he sat down to his writing; she had enough of her own.

They went to Ventnor. Mrs. Gillespie with great pleasure undertook the charge of her and promised to deliver her safely to her friends in Scotland. It was arranged that she should go back to Thirlwall to make her adieus; and that in a week or two a carriage should be sent to bring her to Ventnor, where her preparations for the journey should be made, and whence the whole party would set off."

"So you are going to be a Scotchwoman after all, Ellen," said Miss Sophia.

"I had a great deal rather be an American, Miss Sophia."

"Why Hutchinson will tell you," said the young lady, "that it is infinitely more desirable to be a Scotchwoman than that."

Ellen's face, however, looked so little inclined to be merry that she took up the subject in another tone.

"Seriously, do you know," said she, "I have been thinking it is a very happy thing for you. I don't know what would become of you alone in that great parsonage house. You would mope yourself to death in a little while; especially now that Mr. John is gone."

"He will be back," said Ellen.

"Yes but what if he is? he can't stay at Thirlwall, child. He can't live thirty miles from his church you know. Did you think he would? They think all the world of him already. I expect they'll barely put up with Mr. George while he is gone;—they will want Mr. John all to themselves when he comes back, you may rely on that. What *are* you thinking of, child?"

For Ellen's eyes were sparkling with two or three thoughts which Miss Sophia could not read.

"I should like to know what you are smiling at," she said with some curiosity. But the smile was almost immediately quenched in tears.

Notwithstanding Miss Sophia's discouraging talk, Ellen privately agreed with Ellen Chauncey that the Brownie should be sent to her to keep and use as her own, *till his mistress should come back;* both children being entirely of opinion that the arrangement was a most unexceptionable one.

It was not forgotten that the lapse of three years since the

date of the letters left some uncertainty as to the present state of affairs among Ellen's friends in Scotland; but this doubt was not thought sufficient to justify her letting pass so excellent an opportunity of making the journey. Especially as Captain Montgomery's letter spoke of an *uncle*, to whom equally with her grandmother, Ellen was to be consigned. In case circumstances would permit it, Mrs. Gillespie engaged to keep Ellen with her, and bring her home to America when she herself should return.

And in little more than a month they were gone; adieus and preparations and all were over. Ellen's parting with Mrs. Vawse was very tender and very sad;—with Mr. Van Brunt, extremely and gratefully affectionate, on both sides;—with her aunt, constrained and brief;—with Margery very sorrowful indeed. But Ellen's longest and most lingering adieu was to Captain Parry, the old grey cat. For one whole evening she sat with him in her arms; and over poor pussy were shed the tears that fell for many better loved and better deserving personages, as well as those not a few that were wept for him. Since Alice's death Parry had transferred his entire confidence and esteem to Ellen; whether from feeling a want, or because love and tenderness had taught her the touch and the tone that were fitted to win his regard. Only John shared it. Ellen was his chief favorite and almost constant companion. And bitterer tears Ellen shed at no time than that evening before she went away, over the old cat. She could not distress kitty with her distress, nor weary him with the calls upon his sympathy, though indeed it is true that he sundry times poked his nose up wonderingly and caressingly in her face. She had no remonstrance or interruption to fear; and taking pussy as the emblem and representative of the whole household, Ellen wept them all over him; with a tenderness and a bitterness that were somehow intensified by the sight of the grey coat, and white paws, and kindly face, of her unconscious old brute friend.

The old people at Carra-carra were taken leave of; the Brownie too, with great difficulty. And Nancy.

"I'm real sorry you are going, Ellen," said she;—"you're the only soul in town I care about. I wish I'd thrown them letters in the fire after all! Who'd ha' thought it!"

Ellen could not help in her heart echoing the wish.

"I'm real sorry, Ellen, she repeated. Aint there something I can do for you when you are gone?"

"O yes, dear Nancy," said Ellen, weeping,—"if you would only take care of your dear grandmother. She is left alone now. If you would only take care of her, and read your Bible, and be good, Nancy,—Oh Nancy, Nancy! do, do!

They kissed each other, and Nancy went away fairly crying.

Mrs. Marshman's own woman, a steady excellent person, had come in the carriage for Ellen. And the next morning early after breakfast, when everything else was ready, she went into Mr. Humphreys' study to bid the last dreaded good-bye. She thought her obedience was costing her dear.

It was nearly a silent parting. He held her a long time in his arms; and there Ellen bitterly thought her place ought to be. "What have I to do to seek new relations?" she said to herself. But she was speechless; till gently relaxing his hold he tenderly smoothed back her disordered hair, and kissing her, said a very few grave words of blessing and counsel. Ellen gathered all her strength together then, for she had something that *must* be spoken.

"Sir," said she, falling on her knees before him and looking up in his face,—"this don't alter—you do not take back what you said, do you?"

"What's that I said, my child?"

"That," said Ellen, hiding her face in her hands on his knee, and scarce able to speak with great effort,—"that which you said when I first came—that which you said—about"—

"About what, my dear child?"

"My going away don't change anything, does it sir? Mayn't I come back, if ever I can?"

He raised her up and drew her close to his bosom again.

"My dear little daughter," said he, "you cannot be so glad to come back as my arms and my heart will be to receive you. I scarce dare hope to see that day, but all in this house is yours, dear Ellen, as well when in Scotland as

here. I take back nothing, my daughter. Nothing is changed."

A word or two more of affection and blessing, which Ellen was utterly unable to answer in any way,—and she went to the carriage; with one drop of cordial in her heart, that she fed upon a long while. "He called me his daughter!—he never said that before since Alice died! O so I will be as long as I live, if I find fifty new relations. But what good will a daughter three thousand miles off do him!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

Speed. Item. *She is proud.*
Laun. Out with that ;—it was Eve's legacy, and cannot be ta'en from her.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE voyage was peaceful and prosperous; in due time the whole party found themselves safe in London. Ever since they set out Ellen had been constantly gaining on Mrs. Gillespie's good will; the Major hardly saw her but she had something to say about that "best-bred child in the world." "Best hearted too, I think," said the Major ; and even Mrs. Gillespie owned that there was something more than good-breeding in Ellen's politeness. She had good trial of it; Mrs. Gillespie was much longer ailing than any of the party; and when Ellen got well, it was her great pleasure to devote herself to the service of the only member of the Marshman family now within her reach. She could never do too much. She watched by her, read to her, was quick to see and perform all the little offices of attention and kindness where a servant's hand is not so acceptable; and withal never was in the way nor put herself forward. Mrs. Gillespie's own daughter was much less helpful. Both she and William, however, had long since forgotten the old grudge, and treated Ellen as well as they did anybody; rather better. Major Gillespie was attentive and kind as possible to the gentle, well-behaved little body that was always at his wife's pillow; and even Lester, the maid, told one of her friends "she was such a sweet little lady that it was a pleasure and gratification to do anything for her." Lester acted this out; and in her kindly disposition Ellen found very substantial comfort and benefit throughout the voyage.

Mrs. Gillespie told her husband she should be rejoiced if it turned out that they might keep Ellen with them and carry

her back to America; she only wished it were not for Mr. Humphreys but herself. As their destination was not now Scotland, but Paris, it was proposed to write to Ellen's friends to ascertain whether any change had occurred, or whether they still wished to receive her. This however was rendered unnecessary. They were scarcely established in their hotel, when a gentleman from Edinburgh, an intimate friend of the Ventnor family, and whom Ellen herself had more than once met there, came to see them. Mrs. Gillespie bethought herself to make inquiries of him.

"Do you happen to know a family of Lindsays, in Georges street, Mr. Dundas?"

"Lindsays? yes, perfectly well. Do you know them?"

"No; but I am very much interested in one of the family. Is the old lady living?"

"Yes, certainly;—not very old either—not above sixty, or sixty-five; and as hale and alert as at forty. A very fine old lady."

"A large family?"

"O no; Mr. Lindsay is a widower this some years, with no children; and there is a widowed daughter lately come home,—Lady Keith;—that's all."

"Mr. Lindsay—that is, the son?"

"Yes. You would like them. They are excellent people—excellent family—wealthy—beautiful country seat on the south bank of the Tyne, some miles out of Edinburgh; I was down there two weeks ago;—entertain most handsomely and agreeably, two things that do not always go together. You meet a pleasanter circle nowhere than at Lindsay's."

"And that is the whole family?" said Mrs. Gillespie.

"That is all. There were two daughters married to America some dozen or so years ago. Mrs. Lindsay took it very hard I believe, but she bore up, and bears up now, as if misfortune had never crossed her path; though the death of Mr. Lindsay's wife and son was another great blow. I don't believe there is a grey hair in her head at this moment. There is some peculiarity about them perhaps,—some pride too;—but that is an amiable weakness," he added laughing, as he rose to go;—"Mrs. Gillespie, I am sure will not find fault with them for it."

"That's an insinuation, Mr. Dundas; but look here, what

I am bringing to Mrs. Lindsay in the shape of a granddaughter."

"What my old acquaintance Miss Ellen! is it possible!—My dear madam, if you had such a treasure for sale, they would pour half their fortune into your lap to purchase it, and the other half at her feet."

"I would not take it, Mr. Dundas."

"It would be no mean price, I assure you, in itself, however it might be comparatively. I give Miss Ellen joy."

Miss Ellen took none of his giving.

"Ah, Ellen, my dear," said Mrs. Gillespie when he was gone,—"we shall never have you back in America again. I give up all hopes of it. Why do you look so solemn, my love? You are a strange child; most girls would be delighted at such a prospect opening before them."

"You forget what I leave, Mrs. Gillespie."

"So will you, my love, in a few days; though I love you for remembering so well those that have been kind to you. But you don't realize yet what is before you."

"Why you'll have a good time, Ellen," said Marianne;—"I wonder you are not out of your wits with joy. *I* should be."

"You may as well make over the Brownie to me, Ellen," said William;—"I expect you'll never want him again."

"I cannot, you know, William; I lent him to Ellen Chauncey."

"*Lent* him!—that's a good one. For how long?"

Ellen smiled, though sighing inwardly to see how very much narrowed was her prospect of ever mounting him again. She did not care to explain herself to those around her. Still, at the very bottom of her heart lay two thoughts, in which her hope refuged itself. One was a peculiar assurance that whatever her brother pleased, nothing could hinder him from accomplishing; the other, a like confidence that it would not please him to leave his little sister unlooked-after. But all began to grow misty, and it seemed now as if Scotland must henceforth be the limit of her horizon.

Leaving their children at a relation's house, Major and Mrs. Gillespie accompanied her to the north. They traveled post, and arriving in the evening at Edinburgh put up at a hotel in Prince's street. It was agreed that Ellen should not seek her

new home till the morrow; she should eat one more supper and breakfast with her old friends, and have a night's rest, first. She was very glad of it. The Major and Mrs. Gillespie were enchanted with the noble view from their parlor windows; while they were eagerly conversing together, Ellen sat alone at the other window, looking out upon the curious Old Town. There was all the fascination of novelty and beauty about that singular picturesque mass of buildings, in its sober coloring, growing more sober as the twilight fell; and just before outlines were lost in the dusk, lights began feebly to twinkle here and there, and grew brighter and more as the night came on, till their brilliant multitude were all that could be seen where the curious jumble of chimneys and house-tops and crooked ways had shown a little before. Ellen sat watching this lighting up of the Old Town, feeling strangely that she was in the midst of new scenes indeed, entering upon a new stage of life; and having some difficulty to persuade herself that she was really Ellen Montgomery. The scene of extreme beauty before her seemed rather to increase the confusion and sadness of her mind. Happily, joyfully, Ellen remembered, as she sat gazing over the darkening city and its brightening lights, that there was One near her who could not change; that Scotland was no remove from him; that his providence as well as his heaven was over her there; that there, not less than in America, she was his child. She rejoiced, as she sat in her dusky window, over his words of assurance, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine;" and she looked up into the clear sky, (that at least was homelike,) in tearful thankfulness, and with earnest prayer that she might be kept from evil. Ellen guessed she might have special need to offer that prayer. And as again her eye wandered over the singular bright spectacle that kept reminding her she was a stranger in a strange place, her heart joyfully leaned upon another loved sentence,—"This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

She was called from her window to supper.

"Why how well you look," said Mrs. Gillespie; "I expected you would have been half tired to death. Doesn't she look well?"

"As if she were neither tired, hungry, nor sleepy," said Major Gillespie kindly;—"and yet she must be all three."

Ellen was all three. But she had the rest of a quiet mind.

In the same quiet mind, a little fluttered and anxious now, she set out in the post-chaise the next morning with her kind friends to No. — Georges street. It was their intention, after leaving her, to go straight on to England. They were in a hurry to be there; and Mrs. Gillespie judged that the presence of a stranger at the meeting between Ellen and her relations would be desired by none of the parties. But when they reached the house they found the family were not at home; they were in the country—at their place on the Tyne. The direction was obtained, and the horses' heads turned that way. After a drive of some length, through what kind of a country Ellen could hardly have told, they arrived at the place.

It was beautifully situated; and through well-kept grounds they drove up to a large, rather old-fashioned, substantial-looking house. "The ladies were at home;" and that ascertained, Ellen took a kind leave of Mrs. Gillespie, shook hands with the Major at the door, and was left alone, for the second time in her life, to make her acquaintance with new and untried friends. She stood for one second looking after the retreating carriage,—one swift thought went to her adopted father and brother far away,—one to her Friend in heaven,—and Ellen quietly turned to the servant and asked for Mrs. Lindsay.

She was shown into a large room where nobody was, and sat down with a beating heart while the servant went up stairs; looking with a strange feeling upon what was to be her future home. The house was handsome, comfortably, luxuriously furnished; but without any attempt at display. Things rather old-fashioned than otherwise; plain, even homely, in some instances; yet evidently there was no sparing of money in any line of use or comfort; nor were reading and writing, painting and music, strangers there. Unconsciously acting upon her brother's principle of judging of people from their works, Ellen, from what she saw gathered around her, formed a favorable opinion of her relations; with-

out thinking of it, for indeed she was thinking of something else.

A lady presently entered, and said that Mrs. Lindsay was not very well. Seeing Ellen's very hesitating look, she added, "shall I carry her any message for you?"

This lady was well-looking and well dressed; but somehow there was something in her face or manner that encouraged Ellen to an explanation; she could make none. She silently gave her her father's letter, with which the lady left the room.

In a minute or two she returned and said her mother would see Ellen up stairs, and asked her to come with her. This then must be lady Keith!—but no sign of recognition? Ellen wondered, as her trembling feet carried her up stairs, and to the door of a room where the lady motioned her to enter; she did not follow herself.

A large pleasant dressing-room; but Ellen saw nothing but the dignified figure and searching glance of a lady in black, standing in the middle of the floor. At the look which instantly followed her entering, however, Ellen sprang forward, and was received in arms that folded her as fondly and as closely as ever those of her own mother had done. Without releasing her from their clasp, Mrs. Lindsay presently sat down; and placing Ellen on her lap, and for a long time without speaking a word, she overwhelmed her with caresses, —caresses often interrupted with passionate bursts of tears. Ellen herself cried heartily for company, though Mrs. Lindsay little guessed why. Along with the joy and tenderness arising from the finding a relation that so much loved and valued her, and along with the sympathy that entered into Mrs. Lindsay's thoughts, there mixed other feelings. She began to know, as if by instinct, what kind of a person her grandmother was. The clasp of the arms that were about her said as plainly as possible, "I will never let you go!" Ellen felt it; she did not know in her confusion whether she was most glad or most sorry; and this uncertainty mightily helped the flow of her tears.

When this scene had lasted some time Mrs. Lindsay began with the utmost tenderness to take off Ellen's gloves, her cape, (her bonnet had been hastily thrown off long before,) and smoothing back her hair, and taking the fair little face in

both her hands, she looked at it and pressed it to her own, as indeed something most dearly prized and valued. Then saying, "I must lie down; come in here, love,"—she led her into the next room, locked the door, made Ellen stretch herself on the bed; and placing herself beside her drew her close to her bosom again, murmuring, "My own child—my precious child—my Ellen—my own darling—why did you stay away so long from me?—tell me?"

It was necessary to tell; and this could not be done without revealing Miss Fortune's disgraceful conduct. Ellen was sorry for that; she knew her mother's American match had been unpopular with her friends; and now what notions this must give them of one at least of the near connections to whom it had introduced her. She winced under what might be her grandmother's thoughts. Mrs. Lindsay heard her in absolute silence, and made no comment; and at the end again kissed her lips and cheeks, embracing her, Ellen *felt*, as a recovered treasure that would not be parted with. She was not satisfied till she had drawn Ellen's head fairly to rest on her breast, and then her caressing hand often touched her cheek, or smoothed back her hair, softly now and then asking slight questions about her voyage and journey; till exhausted from excitement more than fatigue Ellen fell asleep.

Her grandmother was beside her when she awoke, and busied herself with evident delight in helping her to get off her traveling clothes and put on others; and then she took her down stairs and presented her to her aunt.

Lady Keith had not been at home, nor in Scotland, at the time the letters passed between Mrs. Montgomery and her mother; and the result of that correspondence, respecting Ellen, had been known to no one except Mrs. Lindsay and her son. They had long given her up; the rather as they had seen in the papers the name of Captain Montgomery among those lost in the ill-fated Duc d'Orléans. Lady Keith therefore had no suspicion who Ellen might be. She received her affectionately, but Ellen did not get rid of her first impression.

Her uncle she did not see until late in the day, when he came home. The evening was extremely fair, and having obtained permission, Ellen wandered out into the shrubbery; glad to be alone, and glad for a moment to exchange new

faces for old; the flowers were old friends to her, and never had looked more friendly than then. New and old both were there. Ellen went on softly from flower-bed to flower-bed, soothed and rested, stopping here to smell one, or there to gaze at some old favorite or new beauty, thinking curious thoughts of the past and the future, and through it all taking a quiet lesson from the flowers;—when a servant came after her with a request from Mrs. Lindsay that she would return to the house. Ellen hurried in; she guessed for what, and was sure as soon as she opened the door and saw the figure of a gentleman sitting before Mrs. Lindsay. Ellen remembered well she was sent to her uncle as well as her grandmother, and she came forward with a beating heart to Mrs. Lindsay's outstretched hand, which presented her to this other ruler of her destiny. He was very different from Lady Keith,—her anxious glance saw that at once,—more like his mother. A man not far from fifty years old; fine-looking and stately like her. Ellen was not left long in suspense; his look instantly softened as his mother's had done; he drew her to his arms with great affection, and evidently with very great pleasure; then held her off for a moment while he looked at her changing color and downcast eye, and folded her close in his arms again, from which he seemed hardly willing to let her go, whispering as he kissed her, "You are my own child now,—you are my little daughter,—do you know that, Ellen? I am your father henceforth;—you belong to me entirely, and I belong to you;—my own little daughter!"

"I wonder how many times one may be adopted," thought Ellen that evening;—"but to be sure, my father and my mother have quite given me up here,—that makes a difference; they had a right to give me away if they pleased. I suppose I do belong to my uncle and grandmother in good earnest, and I cannot help myself. Well! but Mr. Humphreys seems a great deal more like my father than my uncle Lindsay. I cannot help that—but how they would be vexed if they knew it!"

That was profoundly true!

Ellen was in a few days the dear pet and darling of the whole household, without exception and almost without limit. At first, for a day or two, there was a little lurking doubt, a little anxiety, a constant watch, on the part of all her

friends, whether they were not going to find something in their newly acquired treasure to disappoint them; whether it could be that there was nothing behind to belie the first promise. Less keen observers, however, could not have failed to see very soon that there was no *disappointment* to be looked for; Ellen was just what she seemed, without the shadow of a cloak in anything. Doubts vanished; and Ellen had not been three days in the house when she was taken home to two hearts at least in unbounded love and tenderness. When Mr. Lindsay was present he was not satisfied without having Ellen in his arms or close beside him; and if not there she was at the side of her grandmother.

There was nothing however in the character of this fondness, great as it was, that would have inclined any child to presume upon it. Ellen was least of all likely to try; but if her will, by any chance, had run counter to theirs, she would have found it impossible to maintain her ground. She understood this from the first with her grandmother; and in one or two trifles since had been more and more confirmed in the feeling that they would do with her and make of her precisely what they pleased, without the smallest regard to her fancy. If it jumped with theirs, very well; if not, it must yield. In one matter Ellen had been roused to plead very hard, and even with tears, to have her wish, which she verily thought she ought to have had. Mrs. Lindsay smiled and kissed her, and went on with the utmost coolness in what she was doing, which she carried through, without in the least regarding Ellen's distress or showing the slightest discomposure; and the same thing was repeated every day, till Ellen got used to it. Her uncle she had never seen tried; but she knew it would be the same with him. When Mr. Lindsay clasped her to his bosom Ellen felt it was as *his own;* his eye always seemed to repeat, "*my own* little daughter;" and in his whole manner love was mingled with as much authority. Perhaps Ellen did not like them much the worse for this, as she had no sort of disposition to displease them in anything; but it gave rise to sundry thoughts however, which she kept to herself; thoughts that went both to the future and the past.

"Lady Keith, it may be, had less *heart* to give than her mother and brother, but pride took up the matter instead;

and according to her measure Ellen held with her the same place she held with Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay; being the great delight and darling of all three; and with all three, seemingly, the great object in life.

A few days after her arrival, a week or more, she underwent one evening a kind of catechising from her aunt, as to her former manner of life;—where she had been and with whom since her mother left her; what she had been doing; whether she had been to school, and how her time was spent at home, &c., &c. No comments whatever were made on her answers, but a something in her aunt's face and manner induced Ellen to make her replies as brief and to give her as little information in them as she could. She did not feel inclined to enlarge upon anything, or to go at all further than the questions obliged her; and Lady Keith ended without having more than a very general notion of Ellen's way of life for three or four years past. This conversation was repeated to her grandmother and uncle.

"To think," said the latter the next morning at breakfast, —"to think that the backwoods of America should have turned us out such a little specimen of"——

"Of what, uncle?" said Ellen laughing.

"Ah, I shall not tell you that," said he.

"But it is extraordinary," said Lady Keith,—"how after living among a parcel of thick-headed and thicker tongued Yankees she should come out and speak pure English in a clear voice;—it is an enigma to me."

"Take care, Catherine," said Mr. Lindsay laughing,—"you are touching Ellen's nationality;—look here," said he, drawing his fingers down her cheek.

"She must learn to have no nationality but yours," said Lady Keith somewhat shortly.

Ellen's lips were open, but she spoke not.

"It is well you have come out from the Americans, you see, Ellen," pursued Mr. Lindsay;—"your aunt does not like them."

"But why, sir?"

"Why," said he gravely,—"don't you know that they are a parcel of rebels who have broken loose from all loyalty and fealty, that no good Briton has any business to like?"

"You are not in earnest, uncle?"

"*You* are, I see," said he, looking amused. "Are you one of those that make a saint of George Washington?"

"No," said Ellen,—"I think he was a great deal better than some saints. But I don't think the Americans were rebels."

"You are a little rebel yourself. Do you mean to say you think the Americans were right?"

"Do you mean to say you think they were wrong, uncle?"

"I assure you," said he, "if I had been in the English army I should have fought them with all my heart."

"And if I had been in the American army I would have fought *you* with all my heart, uncle Lindsay."

"Come, come," said he laughing;—"*you* fight! you don't look as if you would do battle with a good-sized mosquito."

"Ah, but I mean, if I had been a man," said Ellen.

"You had better put in that qualification. After all, I am inclined to think it may be as well for you on the whole that we did not meet. I don't know but we might have had a pretty stiff encounter, though."

"A good cause is stronger than a bad one, uncle."

"But Ellen,—these Americans forfeited entirely the character of good friends to England and good subjects to King George."

"Yes, but it was King George's fault, uncle; he and the English forfeited their characters first."

"I declare," said Mr. Lindsay laughing, "if your sword had been as stout as your tongue, I don't know how I might have come off in that same encounter."

"I hope Ellen will get rid of these strange notions about the Americans," said Lady Keith discontentedly.

"I hope not, aunt Keith," said Ellen.

"Where did you get them?" said Mr. Lindsay.

"What, sir?"

"These notions?"

"In reading, sir; reading different books;—and talking."

"Reading!—So you did read in the backwoods?"

"Sir!" said Ellen, with a look of surprise.

"What have you read on this subject?"

"Two lives of Washington, and some in the Annual Register, and part of Graham's United States; and one or two other little things."

"But those gave you only one side Ellen; you should read the English account of the matter."

"So I did, sir; the Annual Register gave me both sides; the bills and messages were enough."

"What Annual Register?"

"I don't know, sir;—it is English;—written by Burke, I believe."

"Upon my word! And what else have you read?"

"I think that's all, about America," said Ellen.

"No, but about other things?"

"O I don't know, sir," said Ellen smiling;—"a great many books;—I can't tell them all."

"Did you spend all your time over your books?"

"A good deal, sir, lately;—not so much before."

"How was that?"

"I couldn't, sir. I had a great many other things to do."

"What else had you to do?"

"Different things," said Ellen, hesitating from the remembrance of her aunt's manner the night before.

"Come, come! answer me."

"I had to sweep and dust," said Ellen coloring,—"and set tables,—and wash and wipe dishes,—and churn,—and spin,—and—"

Ellen *heard* Lady Keith's look in her, "Could you have conceived it!"

"What shall we do with her?" said Mrs. Lindsay;—"send her to school or keep her at home?"

"Have you never been to school, Ellen?"

"No sir; except for a very little while, more than three years ago."

"Would you like it?"

"I would a *great* deal rather study at home, sir,—if you will let me."

"What do you know now?"

"O I can't tell, sir," said Ellen;—I don't know anything very well,—unless—"

"Unless what?" said her uncle laughing;—"come! now for your accomplishments."

"I had rather not say what I was going to, uncle; please don't ask me."

"Yes, yes," said he;—"I sha'n't let you off. Unless what?"

"I was going to say, unless riding," said Ellen coloring.

"Riding!—And pray how did you learn to ride? Catch a horse by the mane and mount him by the fence and canter off bare-backed? was that it? eh?"

"Not exactly, sir," said Ellen laughing.

"Well, but about your other accomplishments. You do not know anything of French, I suppose?"

"Yes I do, sir."

"Where did you get that?"

"An old Swiss lady in the mountains taught me."

"Country riding, and Swiss French," muttered her uncle. "Did she teach you to speak it?"

"Yes sir."

Mr. Lindsay and his mother exchanged glances, which Ellen interpreted, "Worse and worse."

"One thing at least can be mended," observed Mr. Lindsay. "She shall go to De Courcy's riding school as soon as we get to Edinburgh."

"Indeed, uncle, I don't think that will be necessary."

"Who taught you to ride, Ellen?" asked Lady Keith.

"My brother."

"Humph!—I fancy a few lessons will do you no harm," she remarked.

Ellen colored and was silent.

"You know nothing of music, of course?"

"I cannot play, uncle."

"Can you sing?"

"I can sing hymns."

"Sing hymns! That's the only fault I find with you, Ellen,—you are too sober. I should like to see you a little more gay,—like other children."

"But uncle, I am not unhappy because I am sober."

"But I am," said he. "I do not know precisely what I shall do with you; I must do something!"

"Can you sing nothing but hymns?" said Lady Keith.

"Yes ma'am," said Ellen, with some humor twinkling about her eyes and mouth,—"I can sing 'Hail Columbia!'"

"Absurd!" said Lady Keith.

"Why Ellen," said her uncle laughing,—"I did not know you could be so stubborn; I thought you were made up of gentleness and mildness. Let me have a good look at you,—there's not much stubbornness in those eyes," he said fondly.

"I hope you will never salute *my* ears with your American ditty," said Lady Keith.

"Tut, tut," said Mr. Lindsay, "she shall sing what she pleases, and the more the better."

"She has a very sweet voice," said her grandmother.

"Yes, in speaking, I know; I have not heard it tried otherwise; and very nice English it turns out. Where did you get your English, Ellen?"

"From my brother," said Ellen, with a smile of pleasure.

Mr. Lindsay's brow rather clouded.

"Whom do you mean by that?"

"The brother of the lady that was so kind to me." Ellen disliked to speak the loved names in the hearing of ears to which she knew they would be unlovely.

"How was she so kind to you?"

"Oh sir!—in everything—I cannot tell you;—she was my friend when I had only one beside; she did everything for me."

"And who was the other friend? your aunt?"

"No sir."

"This brother?"

"No sir; that was before I knew him."

"Who then?"

"His name was Mr. Van Brunt."

"Van Brunt!—Humph!—And what was he?"

"He was a farmer, sir."

"A Dutch farmer, eh? how came you to have anything to do with *him?*"

"He managed my aunt's farm, and was a great deal in the house."

"He was! And what makes you call this other *your brother?*"

"His sister called me her sister—and that makes me his."

"It is very absurd," said Lady Keith, "when they are nothing at all to her, and ought not to be."

"It seems then you did not find a friend in your aunt, Ellen?—eh?"

"I don't think she loved me much," said Ellen in a low voice.

"I am very glad we are clear of obligation on *her* score," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"Obligation!—And so you had nothing else to depend on Ellen but this man—this Van something—this Dutchman? what did he do for you?"

"A great deal, sir;"—Ellen would have said more, but a feeling in her throat stopped her.

"Now just hear that, will you?" said Lady Keith. Just think of her in that farm-house, with that sweeping and dusting woman and a Dutch farmer, for these three years!"

"No," said Ellen,—"not all the time; this last year I have been"—

"Where, Ellen?"

"At the other house, sir."

"What house is that?"

"Where that lady and gentleman lived that were my best friends."

"Well it's all very well," said Lady Keith,—"but it is past now; it is all over; you need not think of them any more. We will find you better friends than any of these Dutch Brunters or Grunters."

"Oh aunt Keith!" said Ellen,—"if you knew"—But she burst into tears.

"Come, come," said Mr. Lindsay, taking her in his arms, —"I will not have that. Hush my daughter. What is the matter, Ellen?"

But Ellen had with some difficulty contained herself two or three times before in the course of the conversation, and she wept now rather violently.

"What is the matter, Ellen?"

"Because," sobbed Ellen, thoroughly roused,—"I love them dearly! and I ought to love them with all my heart. I cannot forget them, and never shall; and I can never have better friends—never!—it's impossible—O it's impossible."

Mr. Lindsay said nothing at first except to soothe her; but when she had wept herself into quietness upon his breast, he whispered,

"It is right to love these people if they were kind to you,

but, as your aunt says, that is past. It is not necessary to go back to it. Forget that you were American, Ellen,—you belong to me; your name is not Montgomery any more,—it is Lindsay;—and I will not have you call me 'uncle'—I am your father;—you are my own little daughter, and must do precisely what I tell you. Do you understand me?"

He would have a "yes" from her, and then added, "Go and get yourself ready and I will take you with me to Edinburgh."

Ellen's tears had been like to burst forth again at his words; with great effort she controlled herself and obeyed him.

"I shall do precisely what he tells me of course," she said to herself as she went to get ready;—"but there are some things he cannot command; nor I neither;—I am glad of that! Forget indeed!"

She could not help loving her uncle; for the lips that kissed her were very kind as well as very peremptory; and if the hand that pressed her cheek was, as she felt it was, the hand of power, its touch was also exceeding fond. And as she was no more inclined to dispute his will than he to permit it, the harmony between them was perfect and unbroken.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Bear a lily in thy hand;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.
LONGFELLOW.

MR. LINDSAY had some reason that morning to wish that Ellen would look merrier; it was a very sober little face he saw by his side as the carriage rolled smoothly on with them towards Edinburgh; almost pale in its sadness. He lavished the tenderest kindness upon her, and without going back by so much as a hint to the subjects of the morning, he exerted himself to direct her attention to the various objects of note and interest they were passing. The day was fine, and the country, also the carriage and the horses; Ellen was dearly fond of driving; and long before they reached the city Mr. Lindsay had the satisfaction of seeing her smile break again, her eye brighten, and her happy attention fixing on the things he pointed out to her, and many others that she found for herself on the way,—his horses first of all. Mr. Lindsay might relax his efforts and look on with secret triumph; Ellen was in the full train of delighted observation.

"You are easily pleased, Ellen," he said, in answer to one of her simple remarks of admiration.

"I have a great deal to please me," said Ellen.

"What would you like to see in Edinburgh?"

"I don't know, sir; anything you please."

"Then I will show you a little of the city in the first place."

They drove through the streets of Edinburgh, both the Old and the New Town, in various directions; Mr. Lindsay extremely pleased to see that Ellen was so, and much amused at the curiosity shown in her questions, which however were

by no means as free and frequent as they might have been had John Humphreys filled her uncle's place.

"What large building is that over there?" said Ellen.

"That?—that is Holyrood House."

"Holyrood!—I have heard of that before;—isn't that where Queen Mary's rooms are? where Rizzio was killed?"

"Yes; would you like to see them?"

"Oh *very* much!"

"Drive to the Abbey—So you have read Scottish history as well as American, Ellen?"

"Not very much, sir; only the Tales of a Grandfather yet. But what made me say that,—I have read an account of Holyrood House somewhere. Uncle—"

"Ellen!"

"I beg your pardon, sir;—I forgot;—it seems strange to me," said Ellen, looking distressed.

"It must not seem strange to you, my daughter; what were you going to say?"

"I don't know sir,—O, I was going to ask if the silver cross is here now, to be seen?

"What silver cross?"

"That one from which the Abbey was named, sir,—the silver rood that was given, they pretended, to—I forget now what king,—"

"David First, the founder of the Abbey? No, it is not here, Ellen; David the Second lost it to the English. But why do you say *pretended*, Ellen? It was a very real affair; kept in England for a long time with great veneration."

"O yes, sir; I know the *cross* was real;—I mean, it was pretended that an angel gave it to King David when he was hunting here."

"Well, how can you tell but that was so? King David was made a saint, you know."

"O sir," said Ellen laughing, "I know better than that; I know it was only a monkish trick."

"Monkish trick! which do you mean? the giving of the cross, or the making the king a saint?"

"Both, sir," said Ellen, still smiling.

"At that rate," said Mr. Lindsay, much amused, "if you are such a skeptic, you will take no comfort in anything at the Abbey;—you will not believe anything is genuine."

"I will believe what you tell me, sir."

"Will you? I must be careful what I say to you then, or I may run the risk of losing my own credit."

Mr. Lindsay spoke this half jestingly, half in earnest. They went over the palace.

"Is this very old, sir?" asked Ellen.

"Not very; it has been burnt and demolished and rebuilt, till nothing is left of the old Abbey of King David but the ruins of the chapel, which you shall see presently. The oldest part of the House is that we are going to see now, built by James Fifth, Mary's father, where her rooms are."

At these rooms Ellen looked with intense interest. She pored over the old furniture, the needlework of which she was told was at least in part the work of the beautiful Queen's own fingers; gazed at the stains in the floor of the bed-chamber, said to be those of Rizzio's blood; meditated over the trap-door in the passage, by which the conspirators had come up; and finally sat down in the room and tried to realize the scene which had once been acted there. She tried to imagine the poor Queen and her attendant and her favorite Rizzio sitting there at supper, and how that door, that very door,—had opened, and Ruthven's ghastly figure, pale and weak from illness, presented itself, and then others; the alarm of the moment; how Rizzio knew they were come for him and fled to the Queen for protection; how she was withheld from giving it, and the unhappy man pulled away from her and stabbed with a great many wounds before her face; and there, there!—no doubt,—his blood fell!"—

"You are tired;—this doesn't please you much," said Mr. Lindsay, noticing her grave look.

"O it pleases me *very* much!" said Ellen, starting up;—"I do not wonder she swore vengeance."

"Who?" said Mr. Lindsay laughing.

"Queen Mary, sir."

"Were you thinking of her all this while? I am glad of it. I spoke to you once without getting a word. I was afraid this was not amusing enough to detain your thoughts."

"O yes it was," said Ellen;—"I have been trying to think about all that. I like to look at old things very much."

"Perhaps you would like to see the Regalia."

"The what, sir?"

"The Royal things—the old diadem and sceptre, &c., of the Scottish kings. Well come," said he, as he read the answer in Ellen's face,—"we will go; but first let us see the old chapel."

With this Ellen was wonderfully pleased. This was much older still than Queen Mary's rooms. Ellen admired the wild melancholy look of the gothic pillars and arches springing from the green turf, the large carved window empty of glass, the broken walls;—and looking up to the blue sky, she tried to imagine the time when the gothic roof closed overhead, and music sounded through the arches, and trains of stolid monks paced among them, where now the very pavement was not. Strange it seemed, and hard, to go back and realize it; but in the midst of this, the familiar face of the sky set Ellen's thoughts off upon a new track, and suddenly they were *at home*,—on the lawn before the parsonage. The monks and the Abbey were forgotten; she silently gave her hand to her uncle and walked with him to the carriage.

Arrived at the Crown Room, Ellen fell into another fit of grave attention; but Mr. Lindsay, taught better, did not this time mistake rapt interest for absence of mind. He answered questions and gave her several pieces of information, and let her take her own time to gaze and meditate.

"This beautiful sword," said he, "was a present from Pope Julius Second to James Fourth."

"I don't know anything about the Popes," said Ellen. "James Fourth?—I forget what kind of a king he was."

"He was a very good king;—he was the one that died at Flodden."

"O, and wore an iron girdle because he had fought against his father,—poor man!"

"Why 'poor man,' Ellen? he was a very royal prince; why do you say 'poor man?'"

"Because he didn't know any better, sir."

"Didn't know any better than what?"

"Than to think an iron girdle would do him any good."

"But why wouldn't it do him any good?"

"Because, you know sir, that is not the way we can have our sins forgiven."

"What *is* the way?"

Ellen looked at him to see if he was in jest or earnest. Her

look staggered him a little, but he repeated his question. She cast her eyes down and answered,

"Jesus Christ said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.'"

Mr. Lindsay said no more.

"I wish that was the Bruce's crown," said Ellen after a while. "I should like to see anything that belonged to him."

"I'll take you to the field of Bannockburn some day; that belonged to him with a vengeance. It lies over yonder."

"Bannockburn! will you? and Stirling Castle!—O how I should like that!"

"Stirling Castle," said Mr. Lindsay, smiling at Ellen's clasped hands of delight,—"what do you know of Stirling Castle?"

"From the history, you know, sir; and the Lord of the Isles;—

"Old Stirling's towers arose in light—"

"Go on," said Mr. Lindsay.

"And twined in links of silver bright
Her winding river lay."

"That's this same river Forth, Ellen. Do you know any more?"

"O yes, sir."

"Go on and tell me all you can remember."

"*All;* that would be a great deal, sir."

"Go on till I tell you to stop."

Ellen gave him a good part of the battle, with the introduction to it.

"You have a good memory, Ellen," he said, looking pleased.

"Because I like it, sir; that makes it easy to remember. I like the Scots people."

"Do you!" said Mr. Lindsay much gratified;—"I did not know you liked anything on this side of the water. Why do you like them?"

"Because they never would be conquered by the English."

"So," said Mr. Lindsay, half amused and half disappointed,—"the long and the short of it is, you like them be-

cause they fought the enemies you were so eager to have a blow at."

"O no, sir," said Ellen laughing, "I do not mean that at all; the French were England's enemies too, and helped us besides, but I like the Scots a great deal better than the French. I like them because they would be free."

"You have an extraordinary taste for freedom! And pray, are all the American children as strong republicans as yourself?"

"I don't know, sir; I hope so."

"Pretty well, upon my word!—Then I suppose even the Bruce cannot rival your favorite Washington in your esteem?"

Ellen smiled.

"Eh?" said Mr. Lindsay.

"I like Washington better, sir, of course; but I like Bruce very much.

"Why do you prefer Washington?"

"I should have to think to tell you that, sir."

Very well, think, and answer me."

"One reason, I suppose, is because he was an American," said Ellen.

"That is not reason enough for so reasonable a person as you are, Ellen; you must try again, or give up your preference."

"I like Bruce, very much indeed," said Ellen musingly,—"but he did what he did for *himself*,—Washington didn't."

"Humph!—I am not quite sure as to either of your positions," said Mr. Lindsay.

"And besides," said Ellen, "Bruce did one or two wrong things. Washington always did right."

"He did, eh? What do you think of the murder of Andre?"

"I think it was right," said Ellen firmly.

"Your reasons, my little reasoner?"

"If it had not been right, Washington would not have done it."

"Ha! ha!—So at that rate you may reconcile yourself to anything that chances to be done by a favorite."

"No sir," said Ellen, a little confused, but standing her

ground,—"but when a person *always* does right, if he happen to do something that I don't know enough to understand, I have good reason to think it is right, even though I cannot understand it."

"Very well! but apply the same rule of judgment to the Bruce, can't you?"

"Nothing could make me think the murder of the Red Comyn right, sir. Bruce didn't think so himself."

"But remember, there is a great difference in the times; those were rude and uncivilized compared to these; you must make allowance for that."

"Yes sir, I do; but I like the civilized times best."

"What do you think of this fellow over here,—what's his name?—whose monument I was showing you,—Nelson!"

"I used to like him very much, sir."

"And you do not now?"

"Yes sir, I do; I cannot help liking him."

"That is to say, you would if you could?"

"I don't think, sir, I ought to like a man merely for being great, unless he was good. Washington was great and good both."

"Well what is the matter with Nelson?" said Mr. Lindsay, with an expression of intense amusement;—"I 'used to think,' as you say, that he was a very noble fellow."

"So he was, sir; but he wasn't a good man."

"Why not?"

"Why you know, sir, he left his wife; and Lady Hamilton persuaded him to do one or two other very dishonorable things; it was a great pity!"

"So you will not like any great man that is not good as well. What is your definition of a good man, Ellen?"

"One who always does right because it is right, no matter whether it is convenient or not," said Ellen, after a little hesitation.

"Upon my word, you draw the line close. But opinions often differ as to what is right; how shall we know?"

"From the Bible, sir," said Ellen quickly, with a look that half amused and half abashed him.

"And you, Ellen,—are you yourself *good* after this nice fashion?"

"No, sir; but I wish to be.

"I do believe that. But after all, Ellen, you might like Nelson; those were the only spots in the sun."

"Yes sir; but can a man be a truly great man who is not master of himself?"

"That is an excellent remark."

"It is not mine, sir," said Ellen blushing;—"it was told me; I did not find out all that about Nelson myself; I did not see it all the first time I read his life; I thought he was perfect."

"I know who *I* think is," said Mr. Lindsay kissing her.

They drove now to his house in Georges street. Mr. Lindsay had some business to attend to and would leave her there for an hour or two. And that their fast might not be too long unbroken, Mrs. Allen the housekeeper was directed to furnish them with some biscuits in the library, whither Mr. Lindsay led Ellen.

She liked the looks of it very much. Plenty of books; old-looking comfortable furniture; pleasant light; all manner of etceteras around which rejoiced Ellen's heart. Mr. Lindsay noticed her pleased glance passing from one thing to another. He placed her in a deep easy chair, took off her bonnet and threw it on the sofa, and kissing her fondly asked her if she felt at home. "Not yet," Ellen said; but her look also said it would not take long to make her do so. She sat enjoying her rest, and munching her biscuit with great appetite and satisfaction, when Mr. Lindsay poured her out a glass of sweet wine.

That glass of wine looked to Ellen like an enemy marching up to attack her. Because Alice and John did not drink it, she had always, at first without other reason, done the same; and she was determined not to forsake their example now. She took no notice of the glass of wine, though she had ceased to see anything else in the room, and went on, seemingly as before, eating her biscuit, though she no longer knew how they tasted.

"Why don't you drink your wine, Ellen?"

"I do not wish any, sir."

"Don't you like it?"

"I don't know sir; I have never drunk any."

"No! Taste it and see."

"I would rather not, sir, if you please. I don't care for it."

"Taste it, Ellen!"

This command was not to be disobeyed. The blood rushed to Ellen's temples as she just touched the glass to her lips, and set it down again.

"Well?" said Mr. Lindsay.

"What, sir?"

"How do like it?"

"I like it very well, sir, but I would rather not drink it."

"Why?"

Ellen colored again at this exceedingly difficult question, and answered as well as she could, that she had never been accustomed to it, and would rather not.

"It is of no sort of consequence what you have been accustomed to," said Mr. Lindsay. "You are to drink it all, Ellen."

Ellen dared not disobey. When biscuits and wine were disposed of, Mr. Lindsay drew her close to his side and encircling her fondly with his arms, said,

"I shall leave you now for an hour or two, and you must amuse yourself as you can. The bookcases are open—perhaps you can find something there; or there are prints in those portfolios; or you can go over the house and make yourself acquainted with your new home. If you want anything ask Mrs. Allen. Does it look pleasant to you?"

"Very," Ellen said.

"You are at home here, daughter; go where you will and do what you will. I shall not leave you long. But before I go—Ellen—let me hear you call me father."

Ellen obeyed, trembling, for it seemed to her that it was to set her hand and seal to the deed of gift her father and mother had made. But there was no retreat; it was spoken; and Mr. Lindsay folding her close in his arms kissed her again and again.

"Never let me hear you call me anything else, Ellen. You are mine own now—my own child—my own little daughter. You shall do just what pleases me in everything, and let by-gones be by-gones. And now lie down there and rest, daughter, you are trembling from head to foot;—rest and amuse yourself in any way you like till I return."

He left the room.

"I have done it now!" thought Ellen, as she sat in the corner of the sofa where Mr. Lindsay had tenderly placed her;—"I have called him my father—I am bound to obey him after this. I wonder what in the world they will make me do next. If he chooses to make me drink wine every day, I must do it!—I cannot help myself. That is only a little matter. But what if they were to want me to do something wrong?—they might;—John never did—I could not have disobeyed *him*, possibly!—but I could them, if it was necessary,—and if it is necessary, I will!—I should have a dreadful time—I wonder if I could go through with it. Oh yes, I could, if it was right,—and besides I would rather bear anything in the world from them than have John displeased with me;—a great deal rather! But perhaps after all they will not want anything wrong of me. I wonder if this is really to be my home always, and if I shall never get home again?—John will not leave me here!—but I don't see how in the world he can help it, for my father and my mother, and I myself—I know what he would tell me if he was here, and I'll try to do it. God will take care of me if I follow him; it is none of my business."

Simply and heartily commending her interests to his keeping, Ellen tried to lay aside the care of herself. She went on musing; how very different and how much greater her enjoyment would have been that day if John had been with her. Mr. Lindsay, to be sure, had answered her questions with abundant kindness and sufficient ability; but his answers did not, as those of her brother often did, skillfully draw her on from one thing to another, till a train of thought was opened which at the setting out she never dreamed of; and along with the joy of acquiring new knowledge she had the pleasure of discovering new fields of it to be explored, and the delight of the felt exercise and enlargement of her own powers, which were sure to be actively called into play. Mr. Lindsay told her what she asked, and there left her. Ellen found herself growing melancholy over the comparison she was drawing; and wisely went to the bookcases to divert her thoughts. Finding presently a history of Scotland, she took it down, resolving to refresh her memory on a subject which had gained such new and strange interest for her. Before

long, however, fatigue and the wine she had drunk effectually got the better of studious thoughts; she stretched herself on the sofa and fell fast asleep.

There Mr. Lindsay found her a couple of hours afterwards under the guard of the housekeeper.

"I cam in, sir," she said whispering,—"it's mair than an hour back, and she's been sleeping just like a babby ever syne; she hasna stirred a finger. O, Mr. Lindsay, it's a bonny bairn, and a gude. What a blessing to the house!"

"You're about right there, I believe, Maggie; but how have you learned it so fast?"

"I canna be mista'en, Mr. George,—I ken it as weel as if we had had a year auld acquentance; I ken it by thae sweet mouth and een, and by the look she gied me when you tauld her, sir, I had been in the house near as lang's yoursel. An' look at her eenow. There's heaven's peace within, I'm a'maist assured."

The kiss that wakened Ellen found her in the midst of a dream. She thought that John was a king of Scotland, and standing before her in regal attire. She offered him, she thought, a glass of wine, but raising the sword of state, silver scabbard and all, he with a tremendous swing of it dashed the glass out of her hands; and then as she stood abashed, he bent forward with one of his old grave kind looks to kiss her. As the kiss touched her lips Ellen opened her eyes, to find her brother transformed into Mr. Lindsay, and the empty glass standing safe and sound upon the table.

"You must have had a pleasant nap," said Mr. Lindsay, "you wake up smiling. Come—make haste—I have left a friend in the carriage.—Bring your book along if you want it."

The presence of the stranger, who was going down to spend a day or two at "the Braes," prevented Ellen from having any talking to do. Comfortably placed in the corner of the front seat of the barouche, leaning on the elbow of the carriage, she was left to her own musings. She could hardly realize the change in her circumstances. The carriage rolling fast and smoothly on—the two gentlemen opposite to her, one her father!—the strange, varied, beautiful scenes they were flitting by,—the long shadows made by the descending sun,—the cool evening air,—Ellen, leaning back in the wide easy seat, felt as if she were in a dream. It was singularly

pleasant; she could not help but enjoy it all very much; and yet it seemed to her as if she were caught in a net from which she had no power to get free; and she longed to clasp that hand that could she thought draw her whence and whither it pleased. "But Mr. Lindsay opposite?—I have called him my father—I have given myself to him," she thought;—"but I gave myself to somebody else first;—I can't undo that—and I never will!" Again she tried to be quiet and resign the care of herself to better wisdom and greater strength than her own. "This may all be arranged, easily, in some way I could never dream of," she said to herself; "I have no business to be uneasy. Two months ago, and I was quietly at home and seemed to be fixed there for ever; and now, and without anything extraordinary happening, here I am,—just as fixed. Yes, and before that, at aunt Fortune's,—it didn't seem possible that I could ever get away from being her child; and yet how easily all that was managed. And just so, in some way that I cannot imagine, things may open so as to let me out smoothly from this." She resolved to be patient, and take thankfully what she at present had to enjoy; and in this mood of mind, the drive home was beautiful; and the evening was happily absorbed in the history of Scotland.

It was a grave question in the family that same evening whether Ellen should be sent to school. Lady Keith was decided in favor of it; her mother seemed doubtful; Mr. Lindsay, who had a vision of the little figure lying asleep on his library sofa, thought the room had never looked so cheerful before, and had near made up his mind that she should be its constant adornment the coming winter. Lady Keith urged the school plan.

"Not a boarding-school," said Mrs. Lindsay;—"I will not hear of that."

"No, but a day-school; it would do her a vast deal of good I am certain; her notions want shaking up very much. And I never saw a child of her age so much a child."

"I assure you *I* never saw one so much a woman. She has asked me to-day, I suppose," said he smiling, "a hundred questions or less; and I assure you there was not one foolish or vain one among them; not one that was not sensible, and most of them singularly so."

"She was greatly pleased with her day," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I never saw such a baby face in my life," said Lady Keith,—"in a child of her years."

"It is a face of uncommon intelligence!" said her brother.

"It is both," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I was struck with it the other day," said Lady Keith,—"the day she slept so long upon the sofa up stairs after she was dressed; she had been crying about something, and her eyelashes were wet still, and she had that curious grave innocent look you only see in infants; you might have thought she was fourteen months instead of fourteen years old; fourteen and a half, she says she is."

"Crying?" said Mr. Lindsay;—"what was the matter?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Lindsay, "but that she had been obliged to submit to me in something that did not please her."

"Did she give you any cause of displeasure?"

"No,—though I can see she has strong passions. But she is the first child I ever saw that I think I could not get angry with."

"Mother's heart half misgave her, I believe," said Lady Keith laughing;—"she sat there looking at her for an hour."

"She seems to me perfectly gentle and submissive," said Mr. Lindsay.

"Yes, but don't trust too much to appearances," said his sister. "If she is not a true Lindsay after all I am mistaken. Did you see her color once or twice this morning when something was said that did not please her?"

"You can judge nothing from that," said Mr. Lindsay,—"she colors at everything. You should have seen her to-day when I told her I would take her to Bannockburn."

"Ah she has got the right side of you, brother; you will be able to discern no faults in her presently."

"She has used no arts for it, sister; she is a straightforward little hussy, and that is one thing I like about her; though I was as near as possible being provoked with her once or twice to-day. There is only one thing I wish was altered,—she has her head filled with strange notions—absurd for a child of her age—I don't know what I shall do to get rid of them."

After some more conversation it was decided that school

would be the best thing for this end, and half decided that Ellen should go.

But this half decision Mr. Lindsay found it very difficult to keep to, and circumstances soon destroyed it entirely. Company was constantly coming and going at "the Braes," and much of it of a kind that Ellen exceedingly liked to see and hear; intelligent, cultivated, well-informed people, whose conversation was highly agreeable and always useful to her. Ellen had nothing to do with the talking, so she made good use of her ears.

One evening Mr. Lindsay, a M. Villars, and M. Muller, a Swiss gentleman and a noted man of science, very much at home in Mr. Lindsay's house, were carrying on, in French, a conversation in which the two foreigners took part against their host. M. Villars began with talking about Lafayette; from him they went to the American Revolution, and Washington, and from them to other patriots and other republics, ancient and modern;—MM. Villars and Muller taking the side of freedom and pressing Mr. Lindsay hard with argument, authority, example, and historical testimony. Ellen as usual was fast by his side, and delighted to see that he could by no means make good his ground. The ladies at the other end of the room would several times have drawn her away, but happily for her, and also as usual, Mr. Lindsay's arm was around her shoulders, and she was left in quiet to listen. The conversation was very lively, and on a subject very interesting to her; for America had been always a darling theme; Scottish struggles for freedom were fresh in her mind; her attention had long ago been called to Switzerland and its history by Alice and Mrs. Vawse, and French history had formed a good part of her last winter's reading. She listened with the most eager delight, too much engrossed to notice the good-humored glances that were every now and then given her by one of the speakers. Not Mr. Lindsay;—though his hand was upon her shoulder or playing with the light curls that fell over her temples, *he* did not see that her face was flushed with interest, or notice the quick smile and sparkle of the eye that followed every turn in the conversation that favored her wishes or foiled his;—it was M. Muller. They came to the Swiss, and their famous struggle for freedom against Austrian oppression. M. Muller wished to speak

of the noted battle in which that freedom was made sure, but for the moment its name had escaped him.

"Par ma foi," said M. Villars,—"il m'a entièrement passé!"

Mr. Lindsay could not or would not help him out. But M. Muller suddenly turned to Ellen, in whose face he thought he saw a look of intelligence, and begged of her the missing name."

"Est-ce Morgarten, monsieur?" said Ellen blushing.

"Morgarten! c'est ça!" said he, with a polite, pleased bow of thanks. Mr. Lindsay was little less astonished than the Duke of Argyle when his gardener claimed to be the owner of a Latin work on mathematics.

The conversation presently took a new turn with M. Villars; and M. Muller withdrawing from it addressed himself to Ellen. He was a pleasant-looking elderly gentleman; she had never seen him before that evening.

"You know French well then?" said he, speaking to her in that tongue.

"I don't know, sir," said Ellen modestly.

"And you have heard of the Swiss mountaineers?"

"O yes, sir; a great deal."

He opened his watch and showed her in the back of it an exquisite little painting, asking her if she knew what it was.

"It is an Alpine châlet, is it not, sir?"

He was pleased, and went on, always in French, to tell Ellen that Switzerland was his country; and drawing a little aside from the other talkers, he entered into a long and to her most delightful conversation. In the pleasantest manner he gave her a vast deal of very entertaining detail about the country and the manners and habits of the people of the Alps, especially in the Tyrol, where he had often traveled. It would have been hard to tell whether the child had most pleasure in receiving, or the man of deep study and science most pleasure in giving, all manner of information. He saw, he said, that she was very fond of the heroes of freedom, and asked if she had ever heard of Andrew Hofer, the Tyrolese peasant, who led on his brethren in their noble endeavors to rid themselves of French and Bavarian oppression. Ellen had never heard of him.

"You know William Tell?"

"Oh yes," Ellen said,—she knew him.

"And Bonaparte?"

"Yes, very well."

He went on then to give her in a very interesting way the history of Hofer;—how when Napoleon made over his country to the rule of the King of Bavaria, who oppressed them, they rose in mass; overcame army after army that were sent against them in their mountain fastnesses, and freed themselves from the hated Bavarian government; how years after Napoleon was at last too strong for them; Hofer and his companions defeated, hunted like wild beasts, shot down like them; how Hofer was at last betrayed by a friend, taken, and executed, being only seen to weep at parting with his family. The beautiful story was well told, and the speaker was animated by the eager deep attention and sympathy of his auditor, whose changing color, smiles, and even tears, showed how well she entered into the feelings of the patriots in their struggle, triumph, and downfall; till as he finished she was left full of pity for them and hatred of Napoleon. They talked of the Alps again. M. Muller put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a little painting in mosaic to show her, which he said had been given him that day. It was a beautiful piece of pietra dura work—Mont Blanc. He assured her the mountain often looked exactly so. Ellen admired it very much. It was meant to be set for a brooch or some such thing, he said, and he asked if she would keep it and sometimes wear it, "to remember the Swiss, and to do him a pleasure."

"Moi, monsieur!" said Ellen, coloring high with surprise and pleasure,—"je suis bien obligée—mais, monsieur, je ne saurais vous remercier!"

He would count himself well paid, he said, with a single touch of her lips.

"Tenez, monsieur!" said Ellen, blushing, but smiling, and tendering back the mosaic.

He laughed and bowed and begged her pardon, and said she must keep it to assure him she had forgiven him; and then he asked by what name he might remember her.

"Monsieur, je m' appelle Ellen M——"

She stopped short, in utter and blank uncertainty what to

call herself; Montgomery she dared not; Lindsay stuck in her throat.

"Have you forgotten it?" said M. Muller, amused at her look, "or is it a secret?"

"Tell M. Muller your name, Ellen," said Mr. Lindsay, turning round from a group where he was standing at a little distance. The tone was stern and displeased. Ellen felt it keenly, and with difficulty and some hesitation still, murmured,

"Ellen Lindsay."

"Lindsay? Are you the daughter of my friend Mr. Lindsay?"

Again Ellen hesitated, in great doubt how to answer, but finally, not without starting tears, said,

"Oui, Monsieur,"

"Your memory is bad to night," said Mr. Lindsay, in her ear,—"you had better go where you can refresh it."

Ellen took this as a hint to leave the room, which she did immediately, not a little hurt at the displeasure she did not think she had deserved; she loved Mr. Lindsay the best of all her relations, and really loved him. She went to bed and to sleep again that night with wet eyelashes.

Meanwhile M. Muller was gratifying Mr. Lindsay in a high degree by the praises he bestowed upon his daughter,—her intelligence, her manners, her modesty, and her *French*. He asked if she was to be in Edinburgh that winter, and whether she would be at school; and Mr. Lindsay declaring himself undecided on the latter point, M. Muller said he should be pleased, if she had leisure, to have her come to his rooms two or three times a week to read with him. This offer, from a person of M. Muller's standing and studious habits, Mr. Lindsay justly took as both a great compliment and a great promise of advantage to Ellen. He at once and with much pleasure accepted it. So the question of school was settled.

Ellen resolved the next morning to lose no time in making up her difference with Mr. Lindsay, and schooled herself to use a form of words that she thought would please him. Pride said indeed, "Do no such thing; don't go to making acknowledgements when you have not been in the wrong; you are not bound to humble yourself before unjust displeasure."

Pride pleaded powerfully. But neither Ellen's heart nor her conscience would permit her to take this advice. "He loves me very much," she thought,—"and perhaps he did not understand me last night; and besides, I owe him—yes, I do! —a child's obedience now. I ought not to leave him displeased with me a moment longer than I can help. And besides I couldn't be happy so. God gives grace to the humble—I will humble myself."

To have a chance for executing this determination she went down stairs a good deal earlier than usual; she knew Mr. Lindsay was generally there before the rest of the family, and she hoped to see him alone. It was too soon even for him, however; the rooms were empty; so Ellen took her book from the table, and being perfectly at peace with herself, sat down in the window and was presently lost in the interest of what she was reading. She did not know of Mr. Lindsay's approach till a little imperative tap on her shoulder startled her.

"What were you thinking of last night? what made you answer M. Muller in the way you did?"

Ellen started up, but to utter her prepared speech was no longer possible.

"I did not know what to say," she said, looking down.

"What do you mean by that?" said he angrily. "Didn't you know what I wished you to say?"

"Yes—but—Do not speak to me in that way!" exclaimed Ellen, covering her face with her hands. Pride struggled to keep back the tears that wanted to flow.

"I shall choose my own method of speaking. Why did you not say what you knew I wished you to say?"

"I was afraid—I didn't know—but he would think what wasn't true."

"That is precisely what I wish him and all the world to think. I will have no difference made, Ellen, either by them or you. Now lift up your head and listen to me," said he, taking both her hands,—"I lay my commands upon you, whenever the like questions may be asked again, that you answer simply according to what I have told you, without any explanation or addition. It is true, and if people draw conclusions that are not true, it is what I wish. Do you understand me?"

Ellen bowed.

"Will you obey me?"

She answered again in the same mute way.

He ceased to hold her at arm's length, and sitting down in her chair drew her close to him, saying more kindly,

"You must not displease me, Ellen."

"I had no thought of displeasing you, sir," said Ellen bursting into tears,—"and I was very sorry for it last night. I did not mean to disobey you—I only hesitated"—

"Hesitate no more. My commands may serve to remove the cause of it. You are my daughter, Ellen, and I am your father. Poor child!" said he, for Ellen was violently agitated, —"I don't believe I shall have much difficulty with you."

"If you will only not speak and look at me so," said Ellen,—"it makes me very unhappy"—

"Hush!" said he kissing her;—"do not give me occasion."

"I did not give you occasion, sir?"

"Why Ellen!" said Mr. Lindsay, half displeased again,— "I shall begin to think your aunt Keith is right, that you are a true Lindsay. But so am I,—and I will have only obedience from you—without either answering or argumenting."

"You shall," murmured Ellen. "But do not be displeased with me, father."

Ellen had schooled herself to say that word; she knew it would greatly please him; and she was not mistaken; though it was spoken so low that his ears could but just catch it. Displeasure was entirely overcome. He pressed her to his heart, kissing her with great tenderness, and would not let her go from his arms till he had seen her smile again; and during all the day he was not willing to have her out of his sight.

It would have been easy that morning for Ellen to have made a breach between them that would not readily have been healed. One word of humility had prevented it all, and fastened her more firmly than ever in Mr. Lindsay's affection. She met with nothing from him but tokens of great and tender fondness; and Lady Keith told her mother apart that there would be no doing anything with George; she saw he was getting bewitched with that child.

CHAPTER XLIX.

My heart is sair, I dare nae tell,
My heart is sair for somebody:
I could wake a winter night
For the sake of somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh hey! for somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not,
For the sake of somebody.

OLD SONG.

IN a few weeks they moved to Edinburgh, where arrangements were speedily made for giving Ellen every means of improvement that masters and mistresses, books and instruments, could afford.

The house in Georges street was large and pleasant. To Ellen's great joy, a pretty little room opening from the first landing-place of the private staircase was assigned for her special use as a study and work-room; and fitted up nicely for her with a small book-case, a practising piano, and various etceteras. Here her beloved desk took its place on a table in the middle of the floor, where Ellen thought she would make many a new drawing when she was by herself. Her work-box was accommodated with a smaller stand near the window. A glass door at one end of the room opened upon a small iron balcony; this door and balcony Ellen esteemed a very particular treasure. With marvelous satisfaction she arranged and arranged her little sanctum till she had all things to her mind, and it only wanted, she thought, a glass of flowers. "I will have that too some of these days," she said to herself; and resolved to deserve her pretty room by being very busy there. It was hers alone, open indeed to her friends when they chose to keep her company; but lessons were taken elsewhere; in the library, or the music-room, or more frequently her grandmother's dressing-room. Wherever, or whatever, Mrs. Lindsay or Lady Keith was always present.

Ellen was the plaything, pride, and delight, of the whole family. Not so much however Lady Keith's plaything as her pride; while pride had a less share in the affection of the other two, or rather perhaps was more overtopped by it. Ellen felt however that all their hearts were set upon her, felt it gratefully, and determined she would give them all the pleasure she possibly could. Her love for other friends, friends that they knew nothing of, *American* friends, was, she knew, the sore point with them; she resolved not to speak of those friends, nor allude to them, especially in any way that should show how much of her heart was out of Scotland. But this wise resolution it was very hard for poor Ellen to keep. She was unaccustomed to concealments; and in ways that she could neither foresee nor prevent, the unwelcome truth would come up, and the sore was not healed.

One day Ellen had a headache and was sent to lie down. Alone, and quietly stretched on her bed, very naturally Ellen's thoughts went back to the last time she had had a headache, *at home*, as she always called it to herself. She recalled with a straitened heart the gentle and tender manner of John's care for her; how nicely he had placed her on the sofa; how he sat by her side bathing her temples, or laying his cool hand on her forehead, and once, she remembered, his lips. "I wonder," thought Ellen, "what I ever did to make him love me so much, as I know he does?" She remembered how, when she was able to listen, he still sat beside her, talking such sweet words of kindness and comfort and amusement, that she almost loved to be sick to have such tending, and looked up at him as at an angel. She felt it all over again. Unfortunately, after she had fallen asleep, Mrs. Lindsay came in to see how she was, and two tears, the last pair of them, were slowly making their way down her cheeks. Her grandmother saw them, and did not rest till she knew the cause. Ellen was extremely sorry to tell, she did her best to get off from it, but she did not know how to evade questions; and those that were put to her indeed admitted of no evasion.

A few days later, just after they came to Edinburgh, it was remarked one morning at breakfast that Ellen was very straight and carried herself well.

"It is no thanks to me," said Ellen smiling,—"they never would let me hold myself ill."

"Who is 'they?'" said Lady Keith.

"My brother and sister."

"I wish, George," said Lady Keith discontentedly, "that you would lay your commands upon Ellen to use that form of expression no more. My ears are absolutely sick of it."

"You do not hear it very often, aunt Keith," Ellen could not help saying.

"Quite often enough; and I know it is upon your lips a thousand times when you do not speak it."

"And if Ellen does, we do not," said Mrs. Lindsay, "wish to claim kindred with all the world.

"How came you take up such an absurd habit?" said Lady Keith. "It isn't like you."

"They took it up first," said Ellen;—"I was too glad—"

"Yes, I dare say they had their reasons for taking it up," said her aunt;—"they had acted from interested motives I have no doubt; people always do."

"You are very much mistaken, aunt Keith," said Ellen, with uncontrollable feeling;—"you do not in the least know what you are talking about!"

Instantly, Mr. Lindsay's fingers tapped her lips. Ellen colored painfully, but after an instant's hesitation she said,

"I beg your pardon, aunt Keith, I should not have said that."

"Very well!" said Mr. Lindsay. "But understand, Ellen, however you may have taken it up,—this habit,—you will lay it down for the future. Let us hear no more of brothers and sisters. I cannot, as your grandmother says, fraternize with all the world, especially with unknown relations."

"I am very glad you have made that regulation," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I cannot conceive how Ellen has got such a way of it," said Lady Keith.

"It is very natural," said Ellen, with some huskiness of voice, "that I should say so, because I feel so."

"You do not mean to say," said Mr. Lindsay, "that this Mr. and Miss Somebody—these people—I don't know their names—"

"There is only one now, sir."

"This person you call your brother—do you mean to say you have the same regard for him as if he had been born so?"

"No," said Ellen, cheek and eye suddenly firing,—"but a thousand times more!"

She was exceeding sorry the next minute after she had said this; for she knew it had given both pain and displeasure in a great degree. No answer was made. Ellen dared not look at anybody, and needed not; she wished the silence might be broken; but nothing was heard except a low "whew!" from Mr. Lindsay, till he rose up and left the room. Ellen was sure he was very much displeased. Even the ladies were too much offended to speak on the subject; and she was merely bade to go to her room. She went there, and sitting down on the floor covered her face with her hands. "What shall I do? what shall I do?" she said to herself. "I never shall govern this tongue of mine. Oh I wish I had not said that! they will never forget it. What *can* I do to make them pleased with me again?—Shall I go to my father's study and beg him—but I can't ask him to forgive me—I haven't done wrong—I can't unsay what I said. I can do nothing,—I can only go in the way of my duty and do the best I can,—and maybe they will come round again. But oh dear!"—

A flood of tears followed this resolution.

Ellen kept it; she tried to be blameless in all her work and behaviour, but she sorrowfully felt that her friends did not forgive her. There was a cool air of displeasure about all they said and did; the hand of fondness was not laid upon her shoulder, she was not wrapped in loving arms, as she used to be a dozen times a day; no kisses fell on her brow or lips. Ellen felt it, more from Mr. Lindsay than both the others; her spirits sunk;—she had been forbidden to speak of her absent friends, but that was not the way to make her forget them; and there was scarce a minute in the day when her brother was not present to her thoughts.

Sunday came; her first Sunday in Edinburgh. All went to church in the morning; in the afternoon Ellen found that nobody was going; her grandmother was lying down. She asked permission to go alone.

"Do you want to go because you think you must? or for pleasure?" said Mrs. Lindsay.

"For pleasure!" said Ellen's tongue and her opening eyes at the same time.

"You may go."

With eager delight Ellen got ready, and was hastening along the hall to the door, when she met Mr. Lindsay.

"Where are you going?"

"To church, sir."

"Alone? What do want to go for? No, no, I sha'n't let you. Come in here—I want you with me;—you have been once to-day, already, haven't you? You do not want to go again?"

"I do indeed, sir, very much," said Ellen, as she reluctantly followed him into the library,—"if you have no objection. You know I have not seen Edinburgh yet."

"Edinburgh! that's true, so you haven't," said he, looking at her discomfited face. "Well go, if you want to go so much."

Ellen got as far as the hall door, no further; she rushed back to the library.

"I did not say right when I said that," she burst forth;—"that was not the reason I wanted to go.—I will stay, if you wish me, sir."

"I don't wish it," said he in surprise;—"I don't know what you mean—I am willing you should go if you like it. Away with you! it is time."

Once more Ellen set out, but this time with a heart full; much too full to think of anything she saw by the way. It was with a singular feeling of pleasure that she entered the church alone. It was a strange church to her, never seen but once before, and as she softly passed up the broad aisle she saw nothing in the building or the people around her that was not strange,—no familiar face, nor familiar thing. But it was a church, and she was alone, quite alone in the midst of that crowd; and she went up to the empty pew and ensconced herself in the far corner of it, with a curious feeling of quiet and of being at home. She was no sooner seated, however, than leaning forward as much as possible to screen herself from observation, bending her head upon her knees, she burst into an agony of tears. It was a great relief to be able to weep freely; at home she was afraid of being seen or heard or questioned; now she was alone and free, and she poured out her very heart in weeping that she with difficulty kept from being loud weeping.

"Oh how could I say that! how could I say that! Oh

what *would* John have thought of me if he had heard it!—Am I beginning already to lose my truth? am I going backward already! O what shall I do! what will become of me if I do not watch over myself—there is no one to help me or lead me right—not a single one—all to lead me wrong! what will become of me?—But there is One who has promised to keep those that follow him—he is sufficient, without any others—I have not kept near enough to him! that is it;—I have not remembered nor loved him—'If ye love me, keep my commandments,'—I have not! I have not! Oh but I will!—I will; and he will be with me, and help me and bless me, and all will go right with me."

With bitter tears Ellen mingled as eager prayers, for forgiveness and help to be faithful. She resolved that nothing, come what would, should tempt her to swerve one iota from the straight line of truth; she resolved to be more careful of her private hour; she thought she had scarcely had her full hour a day lately; she resolved to make the Bible her only and her constant rule of life in everything;—and she prayed, such prayers as a heart thoroughly in earnest can pray, for the seal to these resolutions. Not one word of the sermon did Ellen hear; but she never passed a more profitable hour in church in her life.

All her tears were not from the spring of these thoughts and feelings; some were the pouring out of the gathered sadness of the week; some came from recollections, oh how tender and strong! of lost and distant friends. Her mother—and Alice—and Mr. Humphreys—and Margery—and Mr. Van Brunt—and Mr. George Marshman;—and she longed, with longing that seemed as if it would burst her heart, to see her brother. She longed for the pleasant voice, the eye of thousand expressions, into which she always looked as if she had never seen it before, the calm look that told he was satisfied with her, the touch of his hand, which many a time had said a volume. Ellen thought she would give anything in the world to see him and hear him speak one word. As this could not be, she resolved with the greatest care to do what would please him; that when she did see him he might find her all he wished.

She had wept herself out; she had refreshed and strengthened herself by fleeing to the stronghold of the prisoners of

hope; and when the last hymn was given out she raised her head and took the book to find it. To her great surprise she saw Mr. Lindsay sitting at the other end of the pew, with folded arms, like a man not thinking of what was going on around him. Ellen was startled, but obeying the instinct that told her what he would like, she immediately moved down the pew and stood beside him while the last hymn was singing; and if Ellen had joined in no other part of the service that afternoon, she at least did in that with all her heart. They walked home then without a word on either side. Mr. Lindsay did not quit her hand till he had drawn her into the library. There he threw off her bonnet and wrappers and taking her in his arms, exclaimed,

"My poor little darling! what was the matter with you this afternoon?"

There was so much of kindness again in his tone, that overjoyed, Ellen eagerly returned his caress, and assured him there was nothing the matter with her now.

"Nothing the matter!" said he, tenderly pressing her face against his own,—"nothing the matter! with these pale cheeks and wet eyes? nothing *now* Ellen?"

"Only that I am so glad to hear you speak kindly to me again, sir."

"Kindly? I will never speak any way but kindly to you daughter;—come! I will not have any more tears—you have shed enough for to-day I am sure; lift up your face and I will kiss them away. What was the matter with you, my child?"

But he had to wait a little while for an answer.

"What was it, Ellen?"

"One thing," said Ellen,—"I was sorry for what I had said to you, sir, just before I went out."

"What was that? I do not remember anything that deserved to be a cause of grief."

"I told you, sir, when I wanted you to let me go to church, that I hadn't seen Edinburgh yet."

"Well?"

"Well sir, that wasn't being quite true; and I was very sorry for it!"

"Not true? yes it was; what do you mean? you had *not* seen Edinburgh."

"No sir, but I mean—*that* was true, but I said it to make you believe what wasn't true."

"How?"

"I meant you to think, sir, that that was the reason why I wanted to go to church—to see the city and the new sights—and it wasn't at all."

"What was it then?"

Ellen hesitated.

"I always love to go, sir,—and besides I believe I wanted be alone."

"And you were not, after all," said Mr. Lindsay, again pressing her cheek to his,—"for I followed you there. But Ellen, my child, you were troubled without reason; you had said nothing that was false."

"Ah, sir, but I had made you believe what was false."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Lindsay, "you are a nice reasoner. And are you always true upon this close scale?"

"I wish I was sir, but you see I am not. I am sure I hate everything else!"

"Well I will not quarrel with you for being true," said Mr. Lindsay;—"I wish there was a little more of it in the world. Was this the cause of all those tears this afternoon?"

"No sir—not all."

"What beside, Ellen?"

Ellen looked down, and was silent.

"Come—I must know."

"Must I tell you all, sir?"

"You must indeed," said he smiling; "I will have the whole, daughter."

"I had been feeling sorry all the week because you and grandmother and aunt Keith were displeased with me."

Again Mr. Lindsay's silent caress in its tenderness seemed to say that she should never have the same complaint to make again.

"Was that all, Ellen?" as she hesitated.

"No sir."

"Well?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask me further; please do not!—I shall displease you again."

"I will not be displeased."

"I was thinking of Mr. Humpheys," said Ellen in a low tone.

"Who is that?"

"You know, sir,—you say I must not call him—"

"What were you thinking of him."

"I was wishing very much I could see him again."

"Well you *are* a truth-teller," said Mr. Lindsay,—"or bolder than I think you."

"You said you would not be displeased, sir."

"Neither will I, daughter; but what shall I do to make you forget these people?"

"Nothing, sir; I cannot forget them; I shouldn't deserve to have you love me a bit if I could. Let me love them, and do not be angry with me for it!"

"But I am not satisfied to have your body here and your heart somewhere else."

"I must have a poor little kind of heart," said Ellen smiling amidst her tears, "if it had room in it for only one person."

"Ellen," said Mr. Lindsay inquisitively, "did you *insinuate* a falsehood there?"

"No sir!"

"There is honesty in those eyes," said he, "if there is honesty anywhere in the world. I am satisfied—that is, half satisfied. Now lie there my little daughter, and rest," said he, laying her upon the sofa; "you look as if you needed it."

"I don't need anything now," said Ellen, as she laid her cheek upon the grateful pillow, "except one thing—if grandmother would only forgive me too."

"You must try not to offend your grandmother, Ellen, for she does not very readily forgive; but I think we can arrange this matter. Go you to sleep."

"I wonder," said Ellen, smiling as she closed her eyes, "why everybody calls me 'little;' I dont think I am very little. Everybody says 'little.'"

Mr. Lindsay thought he understood it when a few minutes after he sat watching her as she really had fallen asleep. The innocent brow, the perfect sweet calm of the face, seemed to belong to much younger years. Even Mr. Lindsay could not help recollecting the housekeeper's comment, "Heaven's peace within;" scarcely Ellen's own mother ever

watched over her with more fond tenderness than her adopted father did now.

For several days after this he would hardly permit her to leave him. He made her bring her books and study where he was; he went out and came in with her; and kept her by his side whenever they joined the rest of the family at meals or in the evening. Whether Mr. Lindsay intended it or not, this had soon the effect to abate the displeasure of his mother and sister. Ellen was almost taken out of their hands, and they thought it expedient not to let him have the whole of her. And though Ellen could better bear their cold looks and words since she had Mr. Lindsay's favor again, she was very glad when they smiled upon her too, and went dancing about with quite a happy face.

She was now very busy. She had masters for the piano and singing and different branches of knowledge; she went to Mr. Muller regularly twice a week; and soon her riding-attendance began. She had said no more on the subject, but went quietly, hoping they would find out their mistake before long. Lady Keith always accompanied her.

One day Ellen had ridden near her usual time, when a young lady with whom she attended a German class, came up to where she was resting. This lady was several years older than Ellen, but had taken a fancy to her.

"How finely you got on yesterday," said she,—"making us all ashamed. Ah, I guess M.Muller helped you."

"Yes," said Ellen, smiling, "he did help me a little; he helped me with those troublesome pronunciations."

"With nothing else, I suppose? Ah well, we must submit to be stupid. How do you do to-day?"

"I am very tired, Miss Gordon."

"Tired? O you're not used to it."

"No it isn't that," said Ellen;—"I *am* used to it—that is the reason I am tired. I am accustomed to ride up and down the country at any pace I like; and it is very tiresome to walk stupidly round and round for an hour."

"But do you know how to manage a horse? I thought you were only just beginning to learn."

"O no—I have been learning this great while;—only they don't think I know how, and they have never seen me. Are you just come, Miss Gordon?"

"Yes, and they are bringing out Sophronisbe for me—do you know Sophronisbe?—look—that light grey—isn't she beautiful? she's the loveliest creature in the whole stud."

"O I know!" said Ellen; "I saw you on her the other day; she went charmingly. How long shall I be kept walking here, Miss Gordon?"

"Why I don't know—I should think they would find out—what does De Courcy say to you?"

"O he comes and looks at me and says, 'très bien—très bien,' and 'allez comme ça,' and then he walks off."

"Well I declare that is too bad," said Miss Gordon laughing. "Look here—I've got a good thought in my head—suppose you mount Sophronisbe in my place, without saying anything to anybody, and let them see what you are up to. Can you trust yourself? she's very spirited."

"I could trust myself," said Ellen; "but, thank you, I think I had better not."

"Afraid?"

"No, not at all; but my aunt and father would not like it."

"Nonsense! how should they dislike it—there's no sort of danger, you know. Come!—I thought you sat wonderfully for a beginner. I am surprised De Courcy hadn't better eyes. I guess you have learned German before Ellen?—Come, will you?"

But Ellen declined, preferring her plodding walk round the ring to any putting of herself forward. Presently Mr. Lindsay came in. It was the first time he had been there. His eyes soon singled out Ellen.

"My daughter sits well," he remarked to the riding-master.

"A merveille!—Mademoiselle Lindesay does ride rémarquablement pour une beginner—qui ne fait que commencer. Would it be possible that she has had no lessons before?"

"Why, yes—she has had lessons—of what sort I don't know," said Mr. Lindsay, going up to Ellen. "How do you like it, Ellen?"

"I don't like it at all, sir."

"I thought you were so fond of riding."

"I don't call this riding, sir."

"Ha! what *do* you call riding? Here, M. De Courcy—won't you have the goodness to put this young lady on another horse and see if she knows anything about handling him."

"With great pleasure!" M. De Courcy would do anything that was requested of him. Ellen was taken out of the ring of walkers and mounted on a fine animal, and set by herself to have her skill tried in as many various ways as M. De Courcy's ingenuity could point out. Never did she bear herself more erectly; never were her hand and her horse's mouth on nicer terms of acquaintanceship; never, even to please her master, had she so given her whole soul to the single business of managing her horse and herself perfectly well. She knew as little as she cared that a number of persons besides her friends were standing to look at her; she thought of only two people there, Mr. Lindsay and her aunt; and the riding-master, as his opinion might affect theirs.

"C'est très bien,—c'est très bien,"—he muttered,—c'est par-faite-ment—Monsieur, Mademoiselle votre fille has had good lessons—voilà qui est entièrement comme il faut."

"Assez bien," said Mr Lindsay smiling. "The little gipsey!"

"Mademoiselle," said the riding-master as she paused before them,—"pourquoi, wherefore have you stopped in your canter tantôt—a little while ago—et puis récommençér?"

"Monsieur, he led with the wrong foot."

"C'est ça—justement!" he exclaimed.

"Have you practised leaping, Ellen?"

"Yes sir."

"Try her M. De Courcy. How high will you go Ellen?"

"As high as you please, sir," said Ellen, leaning over and patting her horse's neck to hide her smile.

"How you look, child!" said Mr. Lindsay in a pleased tone. "So *this* is what you call riding?"

"It is a little more like it, sir."

Ellen was tried with standing and running leaps, higher and higher, till Mr. Lindsay would have no more of it; and M. De Courcy assured him that his daughter had been taught by a very accomplished rider, and there was little or nothing left for him to do; il n'y pouvoit plus;—but he should be very happy to have her come there to practise, and show an example to his pupils.

The very bright color in Ellen's face as she heard this might have been mistaken for the flush of gratified vanity: it was nothing less. Not one word of this praise did she take

to herself, nor had she sought for herself;—it was all for somebody else; and perhaps so Lady Keith understood it, for she looked rather discomfited. But Mr. Lindsay was exceedingly pleased; and promised Ellen that as soon as the warm weather came she should have a horse, and rides to her heart's content.

CHAPTER L.

She was his care, his hope, and his delight,
Most in his thought, and ever in his sight.

DRYDEN.

ELLEN might now have been in some danger of being spoiled,—not indeed with over-indulgence, for that was not the temper of the family,—but from finding herself a person of so much consequence. She could not but feel that in the minds of every one of her three friends she was the object of greatest importance; their thoughts and care were principally occupied with her. Even Lady Keith was perpetually watching, superintending, and admonishing; though she every now and then remarked with a kind of surprise, that "really she scarcely ever had to say anything to Ellen; she thought she must know things by instinct." To Mr. Lindsay and his mother she was the idol of life; and except when by chance her will might cross theirs, she had what she wished and did what she pleased.

But Ellen happily had two safeguards which effectually kept her from pride or presumption.

One was her love for her brother and longing remembrance of him. There was no one to take his place, not indeed in her affections, for that would have been impossible, but in the daily course of her life. She missed him in everything. She had abundance of kindness and fondness shown her, but the *sympathy* was wanting. She was talked *to*, but not *with*. No one now knew always what she was thinking of, nor if they did would patiently draw out her thoughts, canvass them, set them right or show them wrong. No one now could tell what she was *feeling*, nor had the art sweetly, in a way she scarce knew how, to do away with sadness, or dullness, or perverseness, and leave her spirits clear and bright as the noon-day. With all the petting and fondness she had

from her new friends, Ellen felt alone. She was petted and fondled as a darling possession—a dear plaything—a thing to be cared for, taught, governed, disposed of, with the greatest affection and delight; but John's was a higher style of kindness, that entered into all her innermost feelings and wants; and his was a higher style of authority too, that reached where theirs could never attain; an authority Ellen always felt it utterly impossible to dispute; it was sure to be exerted on the side of what was right; and she could better have borne hard words from Mr. Lindsay than a glance of her brother's eye. Ellen made no objection to the imperativeness of her new guardians; it seldom was called up so as to trouble her, and she was not of late particularly fond of having her own way; but she sometimes drew comparisons.

"I could not any sooner—I could not as soon—have disobeyed John;—and yet he never would have spoken to me as they do if I had."

"*Some* pride perhaps?" she said, remembering Mr. Dundas's words;—"I should say a great deal—John isn't proud;—and yet—I don't know—he isn't proud as they are; I wish I knew what kinds of pride are right and what wrong—he would tell me if he was here."

"What are you in a 'brown study' about, Ellen?" said Mr. Lindsay?"

"I was thinking, sir, about different kinds of pride—I wish I knew the right from the wrong—or is there any good kind?"

"All good, Ellen—all good," said Mr. Lindsay,—"provided you do not have too much of it."

"Would you like me to be proud, sir?"

"Yes," said he, laughing and pinching her cheek, "as proud as you like; if you only don't let *me* see any of it."

Not very satisfactory; but that was the way with the few questions of any magnitude Ellen ventured to ask; she was kissed and laughed at, called metaphysical or philosophical, and dismissed with no light on the subject. She sighed for her brother. The hours with M. Muller were the best substitute she had; they were dearly prized by her, and, to say truth, by him. He had no family, he lived alone; and the visits of his docile and intelligent little pupil became very pleasant breaks in the monotony of his home life. Truly

kind-hearted and benevolent, and a true lover of knowledge, he delighted to impart it. Ellen soon found she might ask him as many questions as she pleased, that were at all proper to the subject they were upon; and he, amused and interested, was equally able and willing to answer her. Often when not particularly busy he allowed her hour to become two. Excellent hours for Ellen. M. Muller had made his proposition to Mr. Lindsay, partly from grateful regard for him, and partly to gratify the fancy he had taken to Ellen on account of her simplicity, intelligence, and good manners. This latter motive did not disappoint him. He grew very much attached to his little pupil; an attachment which Ellen faithfully returned, both in kind, and by every trifling service that it could fall in her way to render him. Fine flowers and fruit, that it was her special delight to carry to M. Muller; little jobs of copying, or setting in order some disorderly matters in his rooms, where he soon would trust her to do anything; or a book from her father's library; and once or twice when he was indisposed, reading to him, as she did by the hour patiently, matters that could neither interest nor concern her. On the whole, and with good reason, the days when they were to meet were hailed with as much pleasure perhaps by M. Muller as by Ellen herself.

Her other safeguard was the precious hour alone which she had promised John never to lose when she could help it. The only time she could have was the early morning before the rest of the family were up. To this hour, and it was often more than an hour, Ellen was faithful. Her little Bible was extremely precious now; Ellen had never gone to it with a deeper sense of need; and never did she find more comfort in being able to disburden her heart in prayer of its load of cares and wishes. Never more than now had she felt the preciousness of that Friend who draws closer to his children the closer they draw to him; she had never realized more the joy of having him to go to. It was her special delight to pray for those loved ones she could do nothing else for; it was a joy to think that He who hears prayer is equally present with all his people, and that though thousands of miles lie between the petitioner and the petitioned-for, the breath of prayer may span the distance and pour blessings on the far-off head. The burden of thoughts and affections gathered

during the twenty-three hours, was laid down in the twenty-fourth; and Ellen could meet her friends at the breakfast table with a sunshiny face. Little they thought where her heart had been, or where it had got its sunshine.

But notwithstanding this, Ellen had too much to remember and regret than to be otherwise than sober,—soberer than her friends liked. They noticed with sorrow that the sunshine wore off as the day rolled on;—that though ready to smile upon occasion, her face always settled again into a gravity they thought altogether unsuitable. Mrs. Lindsay fancied she knew the cause, and resolved to break it up.

From the first of Ellen's coming her grandmother had taken the entire charge of her toilet. Whatever Mrs. Lindsay's notions in general might be as to the propriety of young girls learning to take care of themselves, Ellen was much too precious a plaything to be trusted to any other hands, even her own. At eleven o'clock regularly every day she went to her grandmother's dressing room for a very elaborate bathing and dressing; though not a very long one, for all Mrs. Lindsay's were energetic. Now, without any hint as to the reason, she was directed to come to her grandmother an hour before the breakfast time, to go through then the course of cold-water, sponging, and hair-gloving, that Mrs. Lindsay was accustomed to administer at eleven. Ellen heard in silence, and obeyed, but made up her hour by rising earlier than usual, so as to have it before going to her grandmother. It was a little difficult at first, but she soon got into the habit of it, though the mornings were dark and cold. After a while it chanced that this came to Mrs. Lindsay's ears, and Ellen was told to come to her as soon as she was out of bed in the morning.

"But grandmother," said Ellen,—"I am up a great while before you are; I should find you asleep; don't I come soon enough?"

"What do you get up so early for?"

"You know ma'am—I told you some time ago. I want some time to myself."

"It is not good for you to be up so long before breakfast, and in these cold mornings. Do not rise in future till I send for you."

"But grandmother,—that is the only time for me—there

isn't an hour after breakfast that I can have regularly to myself; and I cannot be happy if I do not have some time."

"Let it be as I said," said Mrs. Lindsay smiling.

"Couldn't you let me come to you at eleven o'clock again, ma'am? *do*, grandmother!"

Mrs. Lindsay touched her lips; a way of silencing her that Ellen particularly disliked, and which both Mr. Lindsay and his mother was accustomed to use.

She thought a great deal on the subject, and came soberly to the conclusion that it was her duty to disobey. "I promised John," she said to herself,—"I will never break that promise! I'll do anything rather. And besides, if I had not, it is just as much my duty—a duty that no one here has a right to command me against. I will do what I think right, come what may."

She could not without its coming to the knowledge of her grandmother. A week or two after the former conversation Mrs. Lindsay made inquiries of Mason, her woman, who was obliged to confess that Miss Ellen's light was always burning when she went to call her.

"Ellen," said Mrs. Lindsay the same day,—"have you obeyed me in what I told you the other morning?—about lying in bed till you are sent for?"

"No, ma'am."

"You are frank! to venture to tell me so. Why have you disobeyed me?"

"Because, grandmother, I thought it was right."

"You think it is right to disobey, do you?"

"Yes, ma'am, if—"

"If what?"

"I mean, grandmother, there is One I must obey even before you."

"If what?" repeated Mrs. Lindsay.

"Please do not ask me, grandmother; I don't want to say that."

"Say it at once, Ellen!"

"I think it is right to disobey if I am told to do what is wrong," said Ellen in a low voice.

"Are you to be the judge of right and wrong?"

"No, ma'am."

"Who then?"

"The Bible."

"I do not know what is the reason," said Mrs. Lindsay, "that I cannot be very angry with you. Ellen, I repeat the order I gave you the other day. Promise me to obey it."

"I cannot, grandmother; I *must* have that hour; I cannot do without it."

"So must I be obeyed, I assure you, Ellen. You will sleep in my room henceforth."

Ellen heard her in despair; she did not know what to do. *Appealing* was not to be thought of. There was, as she said, no time she could count upon after breakfast. During the whole day and evening she was either busy with her studies or masters, or in the company of her grandmother or Mr. Lindsay; and if not there, liable to be called to them at any moment. Her grandmother's expedient for increasing her cheerfulness had marvelous ill success. Ellen drooped under the sense of wrong, as well as the loss of her greatest comfort. For two days she felt and looked forlorn; and smiling now seemed to be a difficult matter. Mr. Lindsay happened to be remarkably busy those two days, so that he did not notice what was going on. At the end of them, however, in the evening, he called Ellen to him, and whisperingly asked what was the matter."

"Nothing, sir," said Ellen, "only grandmother will not let me do something I cannot be happy without doing."

"Is it one of the things you want to do because it is right, whether it is convenient or not?" he asked smiling. Ellen could not smile.

"O father," she whispered, putting her face close to his, "if you would only get grandmother to let me do it!"

The words were spoken with a sob, and Mr. Lindsay felt her warm tears upon his neck. He had however far too much respect for his mother to say anything against her proceedings while Ellen was present; he simply answered that she must do whatever her grandmother said. But when Ellen had left the room, which she did immediately, he took the matter up. Mrs. Lindsay explained, and insisted that Ellen was spoiling herself for life and the world by a set of dull religious notions that were utterly unfit for a child; that she would very soon get over thinking about her habit of morning prayer, and would then do much better. Mr. Lindsay

looked grave; but with Ellen's tears yet wet upon his cheek he could not dismiss the matter so lightly, and persisted in desiring that his mother should give up the point, which she utterly refused to do.

Ellen meanwhile had fled to her own room. The moonlight was quietly streaming in through the casement; it looked to her like an old friend. She threw herself down on the floor, close by the glass, and after some tears, which she could not help shedding, she raised her head and looked thoughtfully out. It was very seldom now that she had a chance of the kind; she was rarely alone but when she was busy.

"I wonder if that same moon is this minute shining in at the glass door at home?—no, to be sure it can't this minute—what am I thinking of?—but it was there or will be there—let me see—east—west—it was there some time this morning I suppose; looking right into our old sitting-room. O moon, I wish I was in your place for once, to look in there too! But it is all empty now—there's nobody there—Mr. Humphreys would be in his study—how lonely, how lonely he must be! O I wish I was back there with him!—John isn't there though—no matter—he will be,—and I could do so much for Mr. Humphreys in the meanwhile. He must miss me. I wonder where John is—nobody writes to me; I should think some one might. I wonder if I am ever to see them again. O he will come to see me surely before he goes home!—but then he will have to go away without me again—I am fast now—fast enough—but oh! am I to be separated from them for ever? Well!—I shall see them in heaven!"

It was a "Well" of bitter acquiescence, and washed down with bitter tears.

"Is it my bonny Miss Ellen?" said the voice of the housekeeper coming softly in;—"is my bairn sitting a' her lane i' the dark? Why are ye no wi' the rest o' the folk, Miss Ellen?"

"I like to be alone, Mrs. Allen, and the moon shines in here nicely."

"Greeting!" exclaimed the old lady, drawing nearer,—"I ken it by the sound o' your voice;—greeting eenow! Are ye no weel, Miss Ellen? What vexes my bairn? O but your father would be vexed an he kenned it!"

"Never mind, Mrs. Allen," said Ellen; "I shall get over it directly; don't say anything about it."

"But I'm wae to see ye," said the kind old woman, stooping down and stroking the head that again Ellen had bowed on her knees;—"will ye no tell me what vexes ye? Ye suld be as blithe as a bird the lang day."

"I can't, Mrs. Allen, while I am away from my friends."

"Frinds! and wha has mair frinds than yoursel, Miss Ellen, or better frinds?—father and mither and a'; where wad ye find thae that will love you mair."

"Ah, but I haven't my brother!" sobbed Ellen.

"Your brither, Miss Ellen? An' wha's he?"

"He's everything, Mrs. Allen! he's everything! I shall never be happy without him!—never! never!"

"Hush, *dear* Miss Ellen! for the love of a' that's gude;—dinna talk that gate! and dinna greet sae! your father wad be sair vexed to hear ye or to see ye."

"I cannot help it," said Ellen;—"it is true."

"It may be sae; but dear Miss Ellen, dinna let it come to your father's ken; ye're his very heart's idol; he disna merit aught but gude frae ye."

"I know it, Mrs. Allen," said Ellen weeping, "and so I *do* love him—better than anybody in the world, except two. But oh! I want my brother!—I don't know how to be happy or good either without him. I want him all the while."

"Miss Ellen, I kenned and loved your dear mither weel for mony a day—will ye mind if I speak a word to her bairn?"

"No, dear Mrs. Allen—I'll thank you;—did you know my mother?"

"Wha suld if I didna? she was brought up in my arms, and a dear lassie. Ye're no muckle like her, Miss Ellen;—ye're mair bonny than her; and no a' thegither sae frack;—though she was douce and kind too."

"I wish"—Ellen began, and stopped.

"My dear bairn, there is Ane abuve wha' disposes a things for us; and he isna weel pleased when his children fash themselves wi' his dispensations. He has ta'en and placed you here, for your ain gude I trust,—I'm sure it's for the gude of us a',—and if ye haena a' things ye wad

wish, Miss Ellen, ye hae Him; dinna forget that my ain bairn."

Ellen returned heartily and silently the embrace of the old Scotchwoman, and when she left her, set herself to follow her advice. She tried to gather her scattered thoughts and smooth her ruffled feelings, in using this quiet time to the best advantage. At the end of half an hour she felt like another creature; and began to refresh herself with softly singing some of her old hymns.

The argument which was carried on in the parlor sunk at length into silence without coming to any conclusion.

"Where is Miss Ellen?" Mrs. Lindsay asked of a servant that came in.

"She is up in her room, ma'am, singing."

"Tell her I want her."

"No—stop," said Mr. Lindsay;—"I'll go myself."

Her door was a little ajar, and he softly opened it without disturbing her. Ellen was still sitting on the floor before the window, looking out through it, and in rather a low tone singing the last verse of the hymn "Rock of Ages."

> While I draw this fleeting breath,—
> When my eyelids close in death,—
> When I rise to worlds unknown,
> And behold thee on thy throne,—
> Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee!

Mr. Lindsay stood still at the door. Ellen paused a minute, and then sung "Jerusalem my happy home." Her utterance was so distinct that he heard every word. He did not move till she had finished, and then he came softly in.

"Singing songs to the moon, Ellen?"

Ellen started and got up from the floor.

"No sir; I was singing them to myself."

"Not entirely, for I heard the last one. Why do you make yourself sober singing such sad things?"

"I don't, sir; they are not sad to me; they are delightful. I love them dearly."

"How came you to love them? it is not natural for a child of your age. What do you love them for, my little daughter?"

"O sir, there are a great many reasons,—I don't know how many."

"I will have patience, Ellen; I want to hear them all."

"I love them because I love to think of the things the hymns are about,—I love the tunes, dearly,—and I like both the words and the tunes better, I believe, because I have sung them so often with friends."

"Humph! I guessed as much. Isn't that the strongest reason of the three?"

"I don't know sir; I don't think it is."

"Is all your heart in America, Ellen, or have you any left to bestow on us?"

"Yes sir."

"Not very much!"

"I love *you*, father," said Ellen, laying her cheek gently alongside of his.

"And your grandmother, Ellen?" said Mr. Lindsay, clasping his arms around her.

"Yes sir."

But he well understood that the "yes" was fainter.

"And your aunt?—speak, Ellen."

"I don't love her as much as I wish I did," said Ellen;—"I love her a little I suppose. O why do you ask me such a hard question, father?"

"That is something you have nothing to do with," said Mr. Lindsay half laughing. "Sit down here," he added, placing her on his knee, "and sing to me again."

Ellen was heartened by the tone of his voice, and pleased with the request. She immediately sang with great spirit a little methodist hymn she had learned when a mere child. The wild air and simple words singularly suited each other.

O Canaan—bright Canaan—
I am bound for the land of Canaan.
O Canaan! it is my happy, happy home—
I am bound for the land of Canaan.

"Does that sound sad, sir?"

"Why yes,—I think it does, rather, Ellen. Does it make you feel merry?"

"Not *merry*, sir,—it isn't *merry*; but I like it very much."

"The tune or the words?"

"Both, sir."

"What do you mean by the land of Canaan?"

"Heaven, sir."

"And do you like to think about that? at your age?"

"Why certainly, sir! Why not?"

"Why *do* you?"

"Because it is a bright and happy place," said Ellen gravely;—"where there is no darkness, nor sorrow, nor death, neither pain nor crying;—and my mother is there, and my dear Alice, and my Saviour is there; and I hope I shall be there too."

"You are shedding tears now, Ellen."

"And if I am, sir, it is not because I am unhappy. It doesn't make me unhappy to think of these things—it makes me glad; and the more I think of them the happier I am."

"You are a strange child. I am afraid your grandmother is right, and that you are hurting yourself with poring over serious matters that you are too young for."

"She would not think so if she knew," said Ellen sighing. "I should not be happy at all without that, and you would not love me half so well, nor she either. O father," she exclaimed, pressing his hand in both her own and laying her face upon it,—"do not let me be hindered in that! forbid me anything you please, but not that! the better I learn to please my best Friend, the better I shall please you."

"Whom do you mean by 'your best friend?'"

"The Lord my Redeemer."

"Where did you get these notions?" said Mr. Lindsay, after a short pause.

"From my mother, first, sir."

"She had none of them when I knew her."

"She had afterwards, then, sir; and O!"—Ellen hesitated,—"I wish everybody had them too!"

"My little daughter," said Mr. Lindsay, affectionately kissing the cheeks and eyes which were moist again,—"I shall indulge you in this matter. But you must keep your brow clear, or I shall revoke my grant. And you belong to me now; and there are some things I want you to forget, and not remember,—you understand? Now don't sing songs to the moon any more to-night—good night, my daughter."

"They think religion is a strange melancholy thing," said Ellen to herself as she went to bed;—"I must not give them reason to think so—I must let my rushlight burn bright—I must take care—I never had more need!"

And with an earnest prayer for help to do so, she laid her head on the pillow.

Mr. Lindsay told his mother he had made up his mind to let Ellen have her way for a while, and begged that she might return to her old room and hours again. Mrs. Lindsay would not hear of it. Ellen had disobeyed her orders, she said;—she must take the consequences.

"She is a bold little hussey, to venture it," said Mr. Lindsay,—"but I do not think there is any naughtiness in her heart."

"No, not a bit. I could not be angry with her. It is only those preposterous notions she has got from somebody or other."

Mr. Lindsay said no more. Next morning he asked Ellen privately what she did the first thing after breakfast. Practise on the piano for an hour, she said.

"Couldn't you do it at any other time?"

"Yes sir, I could practise in the afternoon, only grandmother likes to have me with her."

"Let it be done then, Ellen, in future."

"And what shall I do with the hour after breakfast, sir?"

"Whatever you please," said he smiling.

Ellen thanked him in the way she knew he best liked, and gratefully resolved he should have as little cause as possible to complain of her. Very little cause indeed did he or any one else have. No fault could be found with her performance of duty; and her cheerfulness was constant and unvarying. She remembered her brother's recipe against loneliness and made use of it; she remembered Mrs. Allen's advice and followed it; she grasped the promises, "he that cometh to me shall never hunger,"—and "seek and ye shall find,"—precious words that never yet disappointed any one; and though tears might often fall that nobody knew of, and she might not be so *merry* as her friends would have liked to see her; though her cheerfulness was touched with sobriety, they could not complain; for her brow was always unruffled, her voice clear, her smile ready.

After a while she was restored to her own sleeping room again, and permitted to take up her former habits.

CHAPTER LI.

Other days come back on me
With recollected music.

BYRON.

THOUGH nothing could be smoother than the general course of her life, Ellen's principles were still now and then severely tried.

Of all in the house, next to Mr. Lindsay, she liked the company of the old housekeeper best. She was a simple-minded Christian, a most benevolent and kind-hearted, and withal sensible and respectable person; devotedly attached to the family, and very fond of Ellen in particular. Ellen loved, when she could, to get alone with her, and hear her talk of her mother's young days; and she loved furthermore, and almost as much, to talk to Mrs. Allen of her own. Ellen could to no one else lisp a word on the subject; and without dwelling directly on those that she loved, she delighted to tell over to an interested listener the things she had done, seen, and felt, with them.

"I wish that child was a little more like other people," said Lady Keith one evening in the latter end of the winter.

"Humph!" said Mr. Lindsay,—"I don't remember at this moment any one that I think she could resemble without losing more than she gained."

"O it's of no use to talk to you about Ellen, brother! You can take up things fast enough when you find them out, but you never will see with other people's eyes."

"What do your eyes see, Catherine?"

"She is altogether too childish for her years; she is really a baby."

"I don't know," said Mr. Lindsay smiling; "you should ask M. Muller about that. He was holding forth to me for a quarter of an hour the other day, and could not stint in

her praises. She will go on, he says, just as fast as he pleases to take her."

"O yes—in intelligence and so on, I know she is not wanting; that is not what I mean."

"She is perfectly lady-like always," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"Yes, I know that,—and perfectly child-like too."

"I like that," said Mr. Lindsay; "I have no fancy for your grown-up little girls."

"Well!" said Lady Keith in despair, "you may like it; but I tell you she is too much of a child nevertheless,—in other ways. She hasn't an idea of a thousand things. It was only the other day she was setting out to go, at mid-day, —through the streets with a basket on her arm—some of that fruit for M. Muller I believe."

"If she has any fault," said Mr. Lindsay, "it is want of pride,—but I don't know—I can't say I wish she had more of it."

"O no, of course! I suppose not. And it doesn't take anything at all to make the tears come in her eyes; the other day I didn't know whether to laugh or be vexed at the way she went on with a kitten, for half an hour or more. I wish you had seen her! I am not sure she didn't cry over that. Now I suppose the next thing, brother, you will go and make her a present of one."

"If you have no heavier charges to bring," said Mr. Lindsay smiling, "I'll take breath and think about it."

"But she isn't like anybody else,—she don't care for young companions,—she don't seem to fancy any one out of the family unless it is old Mrs. Allen, and she is absurd about her. You know she is not very well lately, and Ellen goes to see her I know every-day, regularly; and there are the Gordons and Carpenters and Murrays and McIntoshes—she sees them continually, but I don't think she takes a great deal of pleasure in their company. The fact is, she is too sober."

"She has as sweet a smile as I ever saw," said Mr. Lindsay,—"and as hearty a laugh, when she does laugh; she is none of your gigglers."

"But when she does laugh," said Lady Keith, "it is not when other people do. I think she is generally grave when there is most merriment around her."

"I love to hear her laugh," said Mrs. Lindsay; "it is in

such a low sweet tone, and seems to come so from the very spring of enjoyment. Yet I must say I think Catherine is half right."

"With half an advocate," said Lady Keith, "I shall not effect much."

Mr. Lindsay uttered a low whistle. At this moment the door opened, and Ellen came gravely in, with a book in her hand.

"Come here, Ellen," said Mr. Lindsay holding out his hand,—"here's your aunt says you don't like anybody—how is it? are you of an unsociable disposition?"

Ellen's smile would have been a sufficient apology to him for a much graver fault.

"Anybody out of the house, I meant," said Lady Keith.

"Speak, Ellen, and clear yourself," said Mr. Lindsay.

"I like some people," said Ellen smiling;—"I don't think I like a great many people *very* much."

"But you don't like young people," said Lady Keith,—"that is what I complain of; and it's unnatural. Now there's the other day, when you went to ride with Miss Gordon and her brother, and Miss MacPherson and her brother—I heard you say you were not sorry to get home. Now where will you find pleasanter young people?"

"Why don't you like them, Ellen?" said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I do like them, ma'am, tolerably."

"What does 'tolerably' mean?"

"I should have liked my ride better the other day," said Ellen, "if they had talked about sensible things."

"Nonsense!" said Lady Keith. "Society cannot be made up of M. Mullers."

"What did they talk about, Ellen?" said Mr. Lindsay, who seemed amused.

"About partners in dancing,—at least the ladies did,—and dresses, and different gentlemen, and what this one said and the other one said,—it wasn't very amusing to me."

Mr. Lindsay laughed. "And the gentlemen, Ellen; how did you like them?"

"I didn't like them particularly, sir."

"What have you against *them*, Ellen?"

"I don't wish to say anything against them, aunt Keith."

"Come, come,—speak out."

"I didn't like their talking, sir, any better than the ladies'; and besides that, I don't think they are very polite."

"Why not?" said Mr. Lindsay, highly amused.

"I don't think it was very polite," said Ellen, "for them to sit still on their horses when I went out, and let Brocklesby help me to mount. They took me up at M. Muller's, you know, sir; M. Muller had been obliged to go out and leave me."

Mr. Lindsay threw a glance at his sister which she rather resented.

"And pray what do you expect, Ellen?" said she. "You are a mere child—do you think you ought to be treated as a woman?"

"I don't wish to be treated as anything but a child, aunt Keith."

But Ellen remembered well one day at home when John had been before the door on horseback and she had run out to give him a message,—his instantly dismounting to hear it. "And I was more a child then," she thought,—"and he wasn't a stranger."

"Whom *do* you like Ellen?" inquired Mr. Lindsay, who looked extremely satisfied with the result of the examination.

"I like M. Muller, sir."

"Nobody else?"

"Mrs. Allen."

"There!" exclaimed Lady Keith.

"Have you come from her room just now?"

"Yes sir."

"What's your fancy for going there?"

"I like to hear her talk, sir, and to read to her; it gives her a great deal of pleasure;—and I like to talk to her."

"What do you talk about?"

"She talks to me about my mother"—

"And you?"

"I like to talk to her about old times," said Ellen, changing color.

"Profitable conversation!" said Mrs. Lindsay.

"You will not go to her room any more, Ellen," said Mr. Lindsay.

In great dismay at what Mrs. Allen would think, Ellen began a remonstrance. But only one word was uttered;

Mr. Lindsay's hand was upon her lips. He next took the book she still held.

"Is this what you have been reading to her?"

Ellen bowed in answer.

"Who wrote all this?"

Before she could speak he had turned to the front leaf and read, "To my little sister." He quietly put the book in his pocket; and Ellen as quietly left the room.

"I am glad you have said that," said Lady Keith. "You are quick enough when you see anything for yourself, but you never will believe other people."

"There is nothing wrong here," said Mr. Lindsay,—"only I will not have her going back to those old recollections she is so fond of. I wish I could make her drink Lethe!"

"What is the book?" said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I hardly know," said he, turning it over,—"except it is from that person that seems to have obtained such an ascendancy over her—it is full of his notes—it is a religious work."

"She reads a great deal too much of that sort of thing," said Mrs. Lindsay. I wish you would contrive to put a stop to it. You can do it better than any one else; she is very fond of you."

That was not a good argument. Mr. Lindsay was silent; his thoughts went back to the conversation held that evening in Ellen's room, and to certain other things; and perhaps he was thinking that if religion had much to do with making her what she was, it was a tree that bore good fruits.

"I think," said Lady Keith, "that is one reason why she takes so little to the young people she sees. I have seen her sit perfectly grave when they were all laughing and talking around her—it really looks singular—I don't like it—I presume she would have thought it wicked to laugh with them. And the other night;—I missed her from the younger part of the company, where she should have been, and there she was in the other room with M. Muller and somebody else,—gravely listening to their conversation!"

"I saw her," said Mr. Lindsay smiling,—"and she looked anything but dull or sober. I would rather have her gravity, after all, Catherine, than anybody else's merriment I know."

"I wish she had never been detained in America after

the time when she should have come to us," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"I wish the woman had what she deserves that kept back the letters!" said Mr. Lindsay.

"Yes indeed!" said his sister;—"and I have been in continual fear of a visit from that very person that you say gave Ellen the book."

"He isn't here!" said Mr. Lindsay.

"I don't know where he is;—but he *was* on this side of the water, at the time Ellen came on; so she told me."

"I wish he was in Egypt!"

"I don't intend he shall see her if he comes," said Lady Keith, "if I can possibly prevent it. I gave Porterfield orders, if any one asked for her, to tell me immediately, and not her upon any account; but nobody has come hitherto, and I am in hopes none will."

Mr. Lindsay arose and walked up and down the room with folded arms in a very thoughtful style.

Ellen with some difficulty bore herself as usual throughout the next day and evening, though constantly on the rack to get possession of her book again. It was not spoken of nor hinted at. When another morning came she could stand it no longer; she went soon after breakfast into Mr. Lindsay's study, where he was writing. Ellen came behind him and laying both her arms over his shoulders, said in his ear,

"Will you let me have my book again, father?"

A kiss was her only answer. Ellen waited.

"Go to the bookcases," said Mr. Lindsay presently, "or to the bookstore, and choose out anything you like, Ellen, instead."

"I wouldn't exchange it for all that is in them!" she answered with some warmth, and with the husky feeling coming in her throat. Mr. Lindsay said nothing.

"At any rate," whispered Ellen after a minute, "you will not destroy it, or do anything to it?—you will take care of it and let me have it again, won't you, sir?"

"I will try to take care of you, my daughter."

Again Ellen paused; and then came round in front of him to plead to more purpose.

"I will do anything in the world for you, sir," she said earnestly, "if you will give me my book again."

"You must do anything in the world for me," said he, smiling and pinching her cheek,—"without that."

"But it is mine!" Ellen ventured to urge, though trembling.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Lindsay, his tone changing,—"and you are mine, you must understand."

Ellen stood silent, struggling, between the alternate surgings of passion and checks of prudence and conscience. But at last the wave rolled too high and broke. Clasping her hands to her face, she exclaimed, not indeed violently, but with sufficient energy of expression, "O it's not right!—it's not right!"

"Go to your room and consider of that," said Mr. Lindsay. "I do not wish to see you again to-day, Ellen."

Ellen was wretched. Not from grief at her loss merely; that she could have borne; that had not even the greatest share in her distress; she was at war with herself. Her mind was in a perfect turmoil. She had been a passionate child in earlier days; under religion's happy reign that had long ceased to be true of her; it was only very rarely that she or those around her were led to remember or suspect that it had once been the case. She was surprised and half frightened at herself now, to find the strength of the old temper suddenly roused. She was utterly and exceedingly out of humor with Mr. Lindsay, and consequently with everybody and everything else; consequently, conscience would not give her a moment's peace; consequently, that day was a long and bitter fight betwixt right and wrong. Duties were neglected, because she could not give her mind to them; then they crowded upon her notice at undue times; all was miserable confusion. In vain she would try to reason and school herself into right feeling; at one thought of her lost treasure passion would come flooding up and drown all her reasonings and endeavors. She grew absolutely weary.

But the day passed and the night came, and she went to bed without being able to make up her mind; and she arose in the morning to renew the battle.

"How long is this miserable condition to last!" she said to herself. "Till you can entirely give up your feeling of resentment, and apologize to Mr. Lindsay," said conscience. "Apologize!—but I haven't done wrong." "Yes, you have,"

said conscience; "you spoke improperly; he is justly displeased; and you must make an apology before there can be any peace." "But I said the truth—it is *not* right—it is not right! it is wrong; and am *I* to go and make an apology?—I can't do it." "Yes, for the wrong you have done," said conscience,—"that is all your concern. And he has a right to do what he pleases with you and yours, and he may have his own reasons for what he has done; and he loves you very much, and you ought not to let him remain displeased with you one moment longer than you can help—he is in the place of a father to you, and you owe him a child's duty."

But pride and passion still fought against reason and conscience, and Ellen was miserable. The dressing-bell rang.

"There! I shall have to go down to breakfast directly, and they will see how I look,—they will see I am angry and ill-humored. Well, I *ought* to be angry! But what will they think then of my religion?—is my rushlight burning bright? am I honoring Christ now?—is *this* the way to make his name and his truth lovely in their eyes? Oh shame! shame!—I have enough to humble myself for. And all yesterday, at any rate, they know I was angry."

Ellen threw herself upon her knees; and when she rose up the spirit of pride was entirely broken, and resentment had died with self-justification.

The breakfast-bell rang before she was quite ready. She was afraid she could not see Mr. Lindsay until he should be at the table. "But it shall make no difference," she said to herself,—"they know I have offended him—it is right they should hear what I have to say."

They were all at the table. But it made no difference. Ellen went straight to Mr. Lindsay, and laying one hand timidly in his and the other on his shoulder, she at once humbly and frankly confessed that she had spoken as she ought not the day before, and that she was very sorry she had displeased him, and begged his forgiveness. It was instantly granted.

"You are a good child, Ellen," said Mr. Lindsay as he fondly embraced her.

"Oh no, sir!—don't call me so—I am everything in the world but that."

"Then all the rest of the world are good children. Why didn't you come to me before?"

"Because I couldn't sir;—I felt wrong all day yesterday."

Mr. Lindsay laughed and kissed her, and bade her sit down and eat her breakfast.

It was about a month after this that he made her a present of a beautiful little watch. Ellen's first look was of great delight; the second was one of curious doubtful expression, directed to his face, half tendering the watch back to him as she saw that he understood her.

"Why," said he smiling, "do you mean to say you would rather have that than this?"

"A great deal!"

"No," said he, hanging the watch round her neck,—"you shall not have it; but you may make your mind easy, for I have it safe, and it shall come back to you again some time or other."

With this promise Ellen was obliged to be satisfied.

The summer passed in the enjoyment of all that wealth, of purse and of affection both, could bestow upon their darling. Early in the season the family returned to the Braes. Ellen liked it there much better than in the city; there was more that reminded her of old times. The sky and the land, though different from those she best loved, were yet but another expression of nature's face; it was the same face still; and on many a sunbeam Ellen traveled across the Atlantic.* She was sorry to lose M. Muller, but she could not have kept him in Edinburgh; he quitted Scotland about that time.

Other masters attended her in the country, or she went to Edinburgh to attend them. Mr. Lindsay liked that very well; he was often there himself, and after her lesson he loved to have her with him in the library and at dinner and during the drive home. Ellen liked it because it was so pleasant to him; and besides, there was a variety about it, and the drives were always her delight, and she chose his company at any time rather than that of her aunt and grandmother. So, many a happy day that summer had she and

* "Then by a sunbeam I will climb to thee."—GEORGE HERBERT.

Mr. Lindsay together; and many an odd pleasure in the course of them did he find or make for her. Sometimes it was a new book, sometimes a new sight, sometimes a new trinket. According to his promise, he had purchased her a fine horse; and almost daily Ellen was upon his back, and with Mr. Lindsay in the course of the summer scoured the country far and near. Every scene of any historic interest within a good distance of "the Braes" was visited, and some of them again and again. Pleasures of all kinds were at Ellen's disposal; and to her father and grandmother she was truly the light of the eyes.

And Ellen was happy; but it was not all these things, nor even her affection for Mr. Lindsay, that made her so. He saw her calm sunshiny face and busy happy demeanor, and fancied, though he had sometimes doubts about it, that she did not trouble herself much with old recollections, or would in time get over them. It was not so. Ellen never forgot; and sometimes when she seemed busiest and happiest, it was the thought of an absent and distant friend that was nerving her energies and giving color to her cheek. Still, as at first, it was in her hour alone that Ellen laid down care and took up submission; it was that calmed her brow and brightened her smile. And though now and then she shed bitter tears, and repeated her despairing exclamation, "Well! I will see him in heaven!"—in general she lived on hope, and kept at the bottom of her heart some of her old feeling of confidence.

Perhaps her brow grew somewhat meeker and her smile less bright as the year rolled on. Months flew by, and brought her no letters. Ellen marveled and sorrowed in vain. One day mourning over it to Mrs. Allen, the good housekeeper asked her if her friends knew her address? Ellen at first said "to be sure," but after a few minutes' reflection was obliged to confess that she was not certain about it. It would have been just like Mr. Humphreys to lose sight entirely of such a matter, and very natural for her, in her grief and confusion of mind and inexperience, to be equally forgetful. She wrote immmediately to Mr. Humphreys and supplied the defect; and hope brightened again. Once before she had written, on the occasion of the refunding her expenses. Mr. Lindsay and his mother were very prompt to

do this, though Ellen could not tell what the exact amount might be; they took care to be on the safe side, and sent more than enough. Ellen's mind had changed since she came to Scotland; she was sorry to have the money go; she understood the feeling with which it was sent, and it hurt her.

Two or three months after the date of her last letter, she received at length one from Mr. Humphreys, a long, very kind, and very wise one. She lived upon it for a good while. Mr. Lindsay's bills were returned. Mr. Humphreys declined utterly to accept of them, telling Ellen that he looked upon her as his own child up to the time that her friends took her out of his hands, and that he owed her more than she owed him. Ellen gave the money, she dared not give the whole message, to Mr. Lindsay. The bills were instantly and haughtily re-enclosed and sent back to America.

Still nothing was heard from Mr. John. Ellen wondered, waited, wept; sadly quieted herself into submission, and as time went on, clung faster and faster to her Bible and the refuge she found there.

CHAPTER LII.

Hon.—Why didn't you show him up, blockhead?
Butler.—Show him up, sir? With all my heart, sir.
Up or down, all's one to me.

GOOD-NATURED MAN.

ONE evening, it was New Year's eve, a large party was expected at Mr. Lindsay's. Ellen was not of an age to go abroad to parties, but at home her father and grandmother never could bear to do without her when they had company. Generally Ellen liked it very much; not called upon to take any active part herself, she had leisure to observe and enjoy in quiet; and often heard music, and often by Mr. Lindsay's side listened to conversation, in which she took great pleasure. To-night, however, it happened that Ellen's thoughts were running on other things; and Mrs. Lindsay's woman, who had come in to dress her, was not at all satisfied with her grave looks and the little concern she seemed to take in what was going on.

"I wish, Miss Ellen, you'd please hold your head up, and look somewhere—I don't know when I'll get your hair done if you keep it down so."

"O Mason, I think that'll do—it looks very well—you needn't do anything more."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Ellen, but you know it's your grandmother that must be satisfied, and she will have it just so;—there,—now that's going to look lovely;—but indeed Miss Ellen she won't be pleased if you carry such a soberish face down stairs,—and what will the master say! Most young ladies would be as bright as a bee at being going to see so many people, and indeed it's what you should."

"I had rather see one or two persons than one or two hundred," said Ellen, speaking half to herself and half to Mrs. Mason.

"Well for pity's sake, Miss Ellen, dear, if you can, don't look as if it was a funeral it was. There! 'taint much trouble to fix you, anyhow—if you'd only care a little more about it, it would be a blessing. Stop till I fix this lace. The master will call you his white rose-bud to-night, sure enough."

"That's nothing new," said Ellen, half smiling.

Mason left her; and feeling the want of something to raise her spirits, Ellen sorrowfully went to her Bible, and slowly turning it over, looked along its pages to catch a sight of something cheering before she went down stairs.

"*This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*"

"Isn't that enough?" thought Ellen, as her eyes filled in answer. "It ought to be—John would say it was—oh! where is he!"

She went on turning over leaf after leaf.

"*O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee!*"

"That is true surely," she thought. "And I do trust in him—I am blessed—I am happy, come what may. He will let nothing come to those that trust in him but what is good for them—if he is my God I have enough to make me happy—I ought to be happy—I will be happy!—I will trust him, and take what he gives me; and try to leave, as John used to tell me, my affairs in his hand."

For a minute tears flowed; then they were wiped away; and the smile she gave Mr. Lindsay when she met him in the hall was not less bright than usual.

The company were gathered, but it was still early in the evening, when a gentleman came who declined to enter the drawing-room, and asked for Miss Lindsay.

"Miss Lindsay is engaged."

"An' what for suld ye say sae, Mr. Porterfield?" cried the voice of the housekeeper, who was passing in the hall,—"when ye ken as weel as I do that Miss Ellen"—

The butler stopped her with saying something about "my lady," and repeated his answer to the gentleman.

The latter wrote a word or two on a card which he drew from his pocket, and desired him to carry it to Miss Ellen. He carried it to Lady Keith.

"What sort of a person, Porterfield?" said Lady Keith, crumpling the paper in her fingers; and withdrawing a little from the company.

"Uncommon fine gentleman, my lady," Porterfield answered in a low tone.

"A gentleman?" said Lady Keith inquiringly.

"Certain, my lady!—and as up and down spoken as if he was a prince of the blood; he's somebody that is not accustomed to be said 'no' to, for sure."

Lady Keith hesitated. Recollecting however that she had just left Ellen safe in the music-room, she made up her mind; and desired Porterfield to show the stranger in. As he entered, unannounced, her eyes unwillingly verified the butler's judgment; and to the inquiry whether he might see Miss Lindsay she answered very politely, though with regrets that Miss Lindsay was engaged.

"May I be pardoned for asking," said the stranger, with the slightest possible approach to a smile, "whether that decision is imperative? I leave Scotland to-morrow—my reasons for wishing to see Miss Lindsay this evening are urgent."

Lady Keith could hardly believe her ears, or command her countenance to keep company with her expressions of "sorrow that it was impossible—Miss Lindsay could not have the pleasure that evening."

"May I beg then to know at what hour I may hope to see her to-morrow?"

Hastily resolving that Ellen should on the morrow accept a long-given invitation, Lady Keith answered that she would not be in town—she would leave Edinburgh at an early hour."

The stranger bowed and withdrew; that was all the bystanders saw. But Lady Keith, who had winced under an eye that she could not help fancying read her too well, saw that in his parting look which made her uneasy; beckoning a servant who stood near, she ordered him to wait upon that gentleman to the door.

The man obeyed; but the stranger did not take his cloak and made no motion to go.

"No sir! not that way," he said sternly, as the servant laid his hand on the lock;—"show me to Miss Lindsay!"

"Miss Ellen?" said the man doubtfully, coming back, and

thinking from the gentleman's manner that he must have misunderstood Lady Keith;—"where is Miss Ellen, Arthur?"

The person addressed threw his head back towards the door he had just come from on the other side of the hall.

"This way sir, if you please,—what name, sir?"

"No name—stand back!" said the stranger as he entered.

There were a number of people gathered round a lady who was at the piano singing. Ellen was there in the midst of them. The gentleman advanced quietly to the edge of the group and stood there without being noticed; Ellen's eyes were bent on the floor. The expression of her face touched and pleased him greatly; it was precisely what he wished to see. Without having the least shadow of sorrow upon it, there was in all its lines that singular mixture of gravity and sweetness that is never seen but where religion and discipline have done their work well; the writing of the wisdom that looks soberly, and the love that looks kindly, on all things. He was not sure at first whether she were intently listening to the music, or whether her mind was upon something far different and far away; he thought the latter. He was right. Ellen at the moment had escaped from the company and the noisy sounds of the performer at her side; and while her eye was curiously tracing out the pattern of the carpet, her mind was resting itself in one of the verses she had been reading that same evening. Suddenly, and as it seemed, from no connection with anything in or out of her thoughts, there came to her mind the image of John as she had seen him that first evening she ever saw him, at Carra-carra, when she looked up from the boiling chocolate and espied him,—standing in an attitude of waiting near the door. Ellen at first wondered how that thought should have come into her head just then; the next moment, from a sudden impulse, she raised her eyes to search for the cause, and saw John's smile.

It would not be easy to describe the change in Ellen's face. Lightning makes as quick and as brilliant an illumination, but lightning does not stay. With a spring she reached him, and seizing both his hands drew him out of the door near which they were standing; and as soon as they were hidden from view threw herself into his arms in an agony of joy. Before however either of them could say a word, she had caught his

hand again, and led him back along the hall to the private staircase; she mounted it rapidly to *her room;* and there she again threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, "Oh John! —my dear John! my dear brother!"

But neither smiles nor words would do for the overcharged heart. The tide of joy ran too strong, and too much swelled from the open sources of love and memory, to keep any bounds. And it kept none. Ellen sat down, and bowing her head on the arm of the sofa wept with all the vehement passion of her childhood, quivering from head to foot with convulsive sobs. John might guess from the out-pouring now how much her heart had been secretly gathering for months past. For a little while he walked up and down the room; but this excessive agitation he was not willing should continue. He said nothing; sitting down beside Ellen on the sofa, he quietly possessed himself of one of her hands; and when in her excitement the hand struggled to get away again, it was not permitted. Ellen understood that very well and immediately checked herself. Better than words, the calm firm grasp of his hand quieted her. Her sobbing stilled; she turned from the arm of the sofa, and leaning her head upon him took his hand in both hers and pressed it to her lips as if she were half beside herself. But that was not permitted to last either, for his hand quickly imprisoned hers again. There was silence still. Ellen could not look up yet, and neither seemed very forward to speak; she sat gradually quieting down into fullness of happiness.

"I thought you never would come, John," at length Ellen half whispered, half said.

"And I cannot stay now. I must leave you to-morrow, Ellie."

Ellen started up and looked up now.

"Leave me! For how long? Where are you going."

"Home."

"To America!"—Ellen's heart died within her. Was *this* the end of all her hopes? did her confidence end *here?* She shed no tears now. He could see that she grew absolutely still from intense feeling.

"What's the matter, Ellie?" said the low gentle tones she so well remembered;—"I am leaving you but for a time. I *must* go home now, but if I live you will see me again."

"O I wish I was going with you!" Ellen exclaimed, bursting into tears.

"My dear Ellie!"—said her brother in an altered voice, drawing her again to his arms,—"you cannot wish it more than I!"

"I never thought you would leave me here, John."

"Neither would I, if I could help it;—neither will I a minute longer than I can help; but we must both wait, my own Ellie. Do not cry so, for my sake!"

"Wait?—till when?" said Ellen, not a little reassured.

"I have no power now to remove you from your legal guardians, and you have no right to choose for yourself."

"And when shall I?"

"In a few years."

"A few years!—But in the meantime, John, what shall I do without you?—If I could see you once in a while—but there is no one here—not a single one—to help me to keep right; no one talks to me as you used to; and I am all the while afraid I shall go wrong in something;—what shall I do?"

"What the weak must always do, Ellie,—seek for strength where it may be had."

"And so I do, John," said Ellen weeping,—but I want you,—oh how much!"

"Are you not happy here?"

"Yes—I am happy—at least I thought I was half an hour ago,—as happy as I can be. I have everything to make me happy, except what would do it."

"We must both have recourse to our old remedy against sorrow and loneliness—you have not forgotten the use of it, Ellie?"

"No John," said Ellen, meeting his eyes with a tearful smile.

"They love you here, do they not?"

"Very much—too much."

"And you love them?"

"Yes."

"That's a doubtful 'yes.'"

"I do love my father—very much; and my grandmother too, though not so much. I cannot help loving them,—they love me so. But they are so unlike you!"

"That is not much to the purpose, after all," said John smiling. "There are varieties of excellence in the world."

"O yes, but that isn't what I mean; it isn't a variety of excellence. They make me do everything that they have a mind,—I dont mean," she added smiling, "that *that* is not like you,—but you always had a reason; they are different. My father makes me drink wine every now and then,—I don't like to do it, and he knows I do not, and I think that is the reason I have to do it."

"That is not a matter of great importance, Ellie, provided they do not make you do something wrong."

"They could not do that I hope; and there is another thing they cannot make me do."

"What is that?"

"Stay here when you will take me away."

There was a few minutes' thoughtful pause on both sides.

"You are grown, Ellie," said John,—"you are not the child I left you."

"I don't know," said Ellen smiling,—"it seems to me I am just the same."

"Let me see—look at me!"

She raised her face, and amidst smiles and tears its look was not less clear and frank than his was penetrating. "Just the same," was the verdict of her brother's eyes a moment afterwards. Ellen's smile grew bright as she read it there.

"Why have you never come or written before, John?"

"I did not know where you were. I have not been in England for many months till quite lately, and I could not get your address. I think my father was without it for a long time, and when at last he sent it to me, the letter miscarried—never reached me—there were delays upon delays."

"And when you did get it?"

"I preferred coming to writing."

"And now you must go home so soon!"

"I must, Ellie. My business has lingered on a great while, and it is quite time I should return. I expect to sail next week—Mrs. Gillespie is going with me—her husband stays behind till spring."

Ellen sighed.

"I made a friend of a friend of yours whom I met in Switzerland last summer—M. Muller."

"M. Muller! did you! O I'm very glad! I am very glad you know him—he is the best friend I have got here, after my father. I don't know what I should have done without him."

"I have heard him talk of you," said John smiling.

"He has just come back; he was to be here this evening."

There was a pause again.

"It does not seem right to go home without you Ellie," said her brother then. "I think you belong to me more than to anybody."

"That is exactly what I think!" said Ellen with one of her bright looks, and then bursting into tears;—"I am very glad you think so too! I will always do whatever you tell me—just as I used to—no matter what anybody else says."

"Perhaps I shall try you in two or three things, Ellie."

"Will you! in what? O it would make me so happy—so much happier—if I could be doing something to please you. I wish I was at home with you again!"

"I will bring that about, Ellie, by-and-by, if you make your words good."

"I shall be happy then," said Ellen, her old confidence standing stronger than ever,—"because I know you will if you say so. Though how you will manage it I cannot conceive. My father and grandmother and aunt cannot bear to hear me speak of America; I believe they would be glad if there wasn't such a place in the world. They would not even let me think of it if they could help it; I never dare mention your name, or say a word about old times. They are afraid of my loving anybody I believe. They want to have me all to themselves."

"What will they say to you then, Ellie, if you leave them to give yourself to me?"

"I cannot help it," replied Ellen,—"they must say what they please;"—and with abundance of energy, and not a few tears, she went on;—"I love them, but I had given myself to you a great while ago; long before I was his daughter, you called me your little sister—I can't undo that, John, and I don't want to—it doesn't make a bit of difference that we were not born so!"

John suddenly rose and began to walk up and down the room. Ellen soon came to his side, and leaning upon his

arm as she had been used to do in past times, walked up and down with him, at first silently.

"What is it you wanted me to do, John?" she said gently at length;—"you said 'two or three things.'"

"One is that you keep up a regular and full correspondence with me."

"I am very glad you will let me do that," said Ellen,—"that is exactly what I should like, but—"

"What?"

"I am afraid they will not let me."

"I will arrange that."

"Very well," said Ellen joyously,—"then it will do. O it would make me so happy! And you will write to me?"

"Certainly!

"And I will tell you everything about myself; and you will tell me how I ought to do in all sorts of things? that will be next best to being with you. And then you will keep me right."

"I won't promise you that Ellie," said John smiling;—"you must learn to keep yourself right."

"I know you will, though, however you may smile. What next?"

"Read no novels."

"I never do John. I knew you did not like it, and I have taken good care to keep out of the way of them. If I had told anybody why, though, they would have made me read a dozen."

"Why Ellie!" said her brother,—"you must need some care to keep a straight line where your course lies now."

"Indeed I do, John," said Ellen, her eyes filling with tears,—"oh how I have felt that sometimes! And then how I wanted you!"

Her hand was fondly taken in his, as many a time it had been of old, and for a long time they paced up and down; the conversation running sometimes in the strain that both loved and Ellen now never heard; sometimes on other matters; such a conversation as those she had lived upon in former days, and now drank in with a delight and eagerness inexpressible. Mr. Lindsay would have been in dismay to have seen her uplifted face, which, though tears were many a time there, was sparkling and glowing with life and joy in

a manner he had never known it. She almost forgot what the morrow would bring, in the exquisite pleasure of the instant, and hung upon every word and look of her brother as if her life were there.

"And in a few weeks," said Ellen at length, "you will be in our old dear sitting-room again, and riding on the Black Prince!—and I shall be here!—and it will be—

"It will be empty without you, Ellie;—but we have a friend that is sufficient; let us love him and be patient."

"It is very hard to be patient," murmured Ellen. "But dear John there was something else you wanted me to do? what is it? you said 'two or three' things."

"I will leave that to another time."

"But why? I will do it whatever it be—pray tell me."

"No," said he smiling,—"not now,—you shall know by-and-by—the time is not yet. Have you heard of your old friend Mr. Van Brunt?"

"No—what of him?"

"He has come out before the world as a Christian man."

"Has he!"

John took a letter from his pocket and opened it.

"You may see what my father says of him; and what he says of you too, Ellie;—he has missed you much."

"O I was afraid he would," said Ellen,—"I was sure he did!"

She took the letter, but she could not see the words. John told her she might keep it to read at her leisure.

"And how are they all at Ventnor? and how is Mrs. Vawse? and Margery?"

"All well. Mrs. Vawse spends about half her time at my father's."

"I am very glad of that!"

"Mrs. Marshman wrote me to bring you back with me if I could, and said she had a home for you always at Ventnor."

"How kind she is," said Ellen;—"how many friends I find everywhere. It seems to me, John, that everybody almost loves me."

"That *is* a singular circumstance! However, I am no exception to the rule, Ellie."

"O I know that," said Ellen laughing. "And Mr. George?"

"Mr. George is well."

"How much I love him!" said Ellen. "How much I would give to see him. I wish you could tell me about poor Captain and the Brownie, but I don't suppose you have heard of them. O when I think of it all at home, how I want to be there!—Oh John! sometimes lately I have almost thought I should only see you again in heaven."

"My dear Ellie! I shall see you there, I trust; but if we live we shall spend our lives here together first. And while we are parted we will keep as near as possible by praying for and writing to each other. And what God orders let us quietly submit to."

Ellen had much ado to command herself at the tone of these words and John's manner, as he clasped her in his arms and kissed her brow and lips. She strove to keep back a show of feeling that would distress and might displease him. But the next moment her fluttering spirits were stilled by hearing the few soft words of a prayer that he breathed over her head. It was a prayer for her and for himself, and one of its petitions was that they might be kept to see each other again. Ellen wrote the words on her heart.

"Are you going!"

He showed his watch.

"Well I shall see you to-morrow?"

"Shall you be here?"

"Certainly—where else should I be? What time must you set out?"

"I need not till afternoon, but—How early can I see you?"

"As early as you please. O spend all the time with me you can, John!"

So it was arranged.

"And now Ellie, you must go down stairs and present me to Mr. Lindsay."

"To my father!"

For a moment Ellen's face was a compound of expressions. She instantly acquiesced however, and went down with her brother, her heart it must be confessed going very pit-a-pat indeed. She took him into the library, which was not this evening thrown open to company; and sent a servant for Mr. Lindsay. While waiting for his coming, Ellen felt as if she had

not the fair use of her senses. Was that John Humphreys quietly walking up and down the library? Mr. Lindsay's library? and was she about to introduce her brother to the person who had forbidden her to mention his name? There was something however in Mr. John's figure and air, in his utter coolness, that insensibly restored her spirits. Triumphant confidence in him overcame the fear of Mr. Lindsay; and when he appeared, Ellen with tolerable composure met him, her hand upon John's arm, and said, "Father, this is Mr. Humphreys,"—*my brother* she dared not add.

"I hope Mr. Lindsay will pardon my giving him this trouble," said the latter;—"we have one thing in common which should forbid our being strangers to each other. I, at least, was unwilling to leave Scotland without making myself known to Mr. Lindsay."

Mr. Lindsay most devoutly wished the "thing in common" had been anything else. He bowed, and was "happy to have the pleasure," but evidently neither pleased nor happy. Ellen could see that.

"May I take up five minutes of Mr. Lindsay's time to explain, perhaps to apologize," said John, slightly smiling,—"for what I have said?"

A little ashamed, it might be, to have his feeling suspected, Mr. Lindsay instantly granted the request, and politely invited his unwelcome guest to be seated. Obeying a glance from her brother which she understood, Ellen withdrew to the further side of the room, where she could not hear what they said. John took up the history of Ellen's acquaintance with his family, and briefly gave it to Mr. Lindsay, scarce touching upon the benefits by them conferred on her, and skillfully dwelling rather on Ellen herself and setting forth what she had been to them. Mr. Lindsay could not be unconscious of what his visitor delicately omitted to hint at, neither could he help making secretly to himself some most unwilling admissions; and though he might wish the speaker at the antipodes, and doubtless did, yet the sketch was too happily given, and his fondness for Ellen too great, for him not to be delightedly interested in what was said of her. And however strong might have been his desire to dismiss his guest in a very summary manner, or to treat him with haughty reserve, the graceful dignity of Mr. Humphreys'

manners made either expedient impossible. Mr. Lindsay felt constrained to meet him on his own ground—the ground of high-bred frankness; and grew secretly still more afraid that his real feelings should be discerned.

Ellen, from afar, where she could not hear the words, watched the countenances with great anxiety and great admiration. She could see that while her brother spoke with his usual perfect ease, Mr. Lindsay was embarrassed. She half read the truth. She saw the entire politeness where she also saw the secret discomposure, and she felt that the politeness was forced from him. As the conversation went on, however, she wonderingly saw that the cloud on his brow lessened,—she saw him even smile; and when at last they rose, and she drew near, she almost thought her ears were playing her false when she heard Mr. Lindsay beg her brother to go in with him to the company and be presented to Mrs. Lindsay. After a moment's hesitation this invitation was accepted, and they went together into the drawing-room.

Ellen felt as if she was in a dream. With a face as grave as usual, but with an inward exultation and rejoicing in her brother impossible to describe, she saw him going about among the company,—talking to her grandmother,—yes and her grandmother did not look less pleasant than usual,—recognizing M. Muller, and in conversation with other people whom he knew. With indescribable glee Ellen saw that Mr. Lindsay managed most of the time to be of the same group. Never more than that night did she triumphantly think that Mr. John could do anything. He finished the evening there. Ellen took care not to seem too much occupied with him; but she contrived to be near when he was talking with M. Muller, and to hang upon her father's arm when *he* was in Mr. John's neighborhood. And when the latter had taken leave, and was in the hall, Ellen was there before he could be gone. And there came Mr. Lindsay too behind her!

"You will come early to-morrow morning, John?"

"Come to breakfast, Mr. Humphreys, will you?" said Mr. Lindsay, with sufficient cordiality.

But Mr. Humphreys declined this invitation, in spite of the timid touch of Ellen's fingers upon his arm, which begged for a different answer.

"I will be with you early, Ellie," he said however.

"And O! John," said Ellen suddenly, "order a horse and let us have one ride together; let me show you Edinburgh."

"By all means," said Mr. Lindsay,—"let us show you Edinburgh; but order no horses, Mr. Humphreys, for mine are at your service."

Ellen's other hand was gratefully laid upon her father's arm as this second proposal was made and accepted.

"Let *us* show you Edinburgh," said Ellen to herself, as she and Mr. Lindsay slowly and gravely went back through the hall. "So! there is an end of my fine morning!—But however, how foolish I am! John has his own ways of doing things—he can make it pleasant in spite of everything."

She went to bed, not to sleep indeed, for a long time, but to cry for joy and all sorts of feelings at once.

Good came out of evil, as it often does, and as Ellen's heart presaged it would when she arose the next morning. The ride was preceded by half an hour's chat between Mr. John, Mr. Lindsay, and her grandmother; in which the delight of the evening before was renewed and confirmed. Ellen was obliged to look down to hide the too bright satisfaction she felt was shining in her face. She took no part in the conversation, it was enough to hear. She sat with charmed ears, seeing her brother overturning all her father's and grandmother's prejudices, and making his own way to their respect at least, in spite of themselves. Her marveling still almost kept even pace with her joy. "I knew he would do what he pleased," she said to herself,—"I knew they could not help that; but I did not dream he would ever make them *like* him,—that I never dreamed!"

On the ride again, Ellen could not wish that her father were not with them. She wished for nothing; it was all a maze of pleasure, which there was nothing to mar but the sense that she would by-and-by wake up and find it was a dream. And no, not that either. It was a solid good and blessing, which though it must come to an end, she should never lose. For the present there was hardly anything to be thought of but enjoyment. She shrewdly guessed that Mr. Lindsay would have enjoyed it too, but for herself; there was a little constraint about him still, she could see. There was

none about Mr. John; in the delight of his words and looks and presence, Ellen half the time forgot Mr. Lindsay entirely; she had enough of them; she did not for one moment wish that Mr. Lindsay had less.

At last the long beautiful ride came to an end; and the rest of the morning soon sped away, though as Ellen had expected she was not permitted to spend any part of it alone with her brother. Mr. Lindsay asked him to dinner, but this was declined.

Not till long after he was gone did Ellen read Mr. Humphreys' letter. One bit of it may be given.

"Mr. Van Brunt has lately joined our little church. This has given me great pleasure. He had been a regular attendant for a long time before. He ascribes much to your instrumentality; but says his first thoughts (earnest ones) on the subject of religion were on the occasion of a tear that fell from Ellen's eye upon his hand one day when she was talking to him about the matter. He never got over the impression. In his own words, 'it scared him!' That was a dear child! I did not know how dear till I had lost her. I did not know how severely I should feel her absence; nor had I the least notion when she was with us of many things respecting her that I have learnt since. I half hoped we should yet have her back, but that will not be. I shall be glad to see you, my son."

The correspondence with John was begun immediately, and was the delight of Ellen's life. Mrs. Lindsay and her daughter wished to put a stop to it; but Mr. Lindsay dryly said that Mr. Humphreys had frankly spoken of it before him, and as he had made no objection then he could not now.

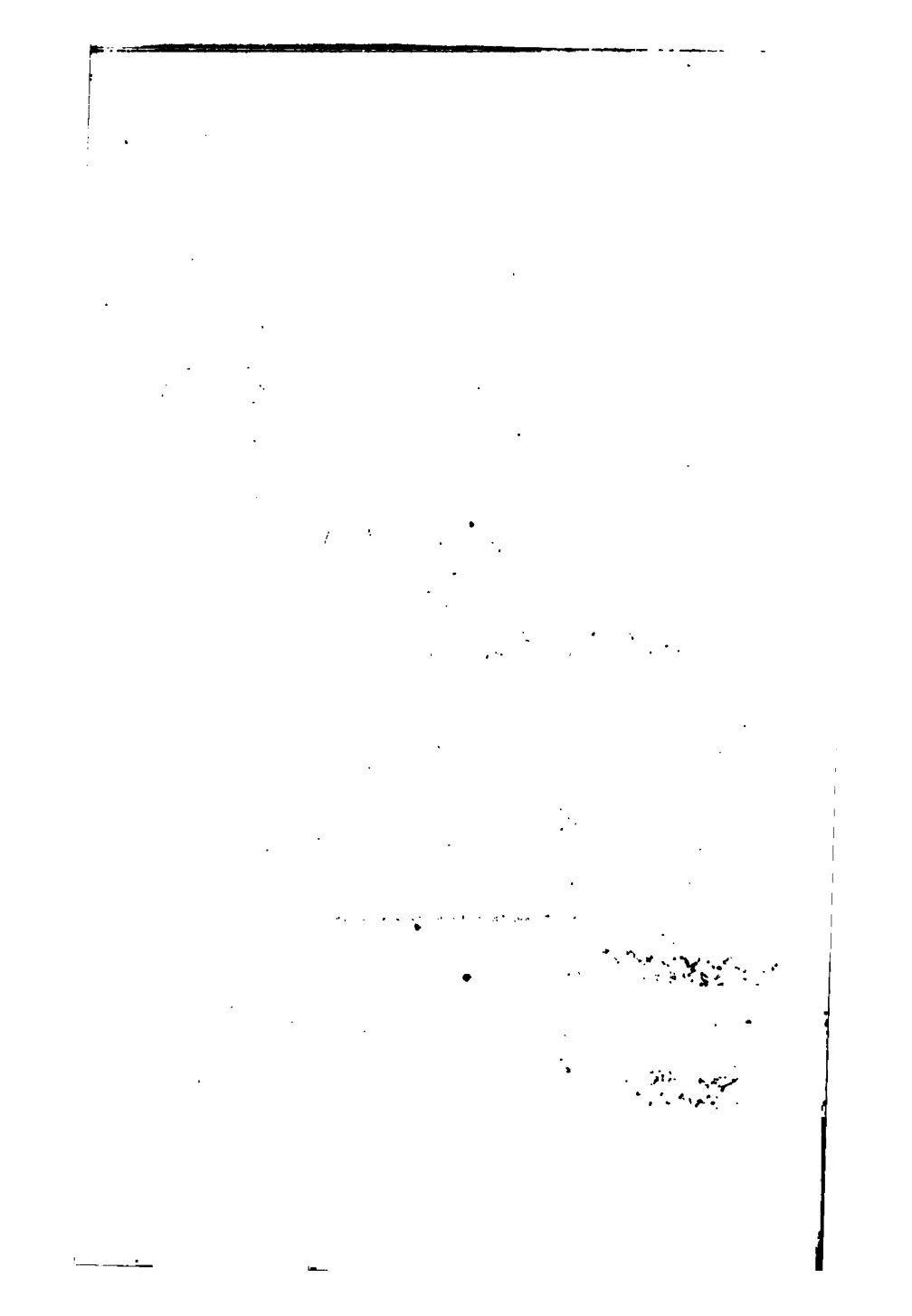
Ellen puzzled herself a little to think what could be the third thing John wanted of her; but whatever it were, she was very sure she would do it!

For the gratification of those who are never satisfied, one word shall be added, to wit, that

The seed so early sown in little Ellen's mind, and so carefully tended by sundry hands, grew in course of time to all the fair stature and comely perfection it had bid fair to reach —storms and winds that had visited it did but cause the root to take deeper hold;—and at the point of its young maturity it happily fell again into those hands that had of all

been most successful in its culture.—In other words, to speak intelligibly, Ellen did in no wise disappoint her brother's wishes, nor he hers. Three or four more years of Scottish discipline wrought her no ill; they did but serve to temper and beautify her Christian character; and then, to her unspeakable joy, she went back to spend her life with the friends and guardians she best loved, and to be to them, still more than she had been to her Scottish relations, the "light of the eyes."

THE END.



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